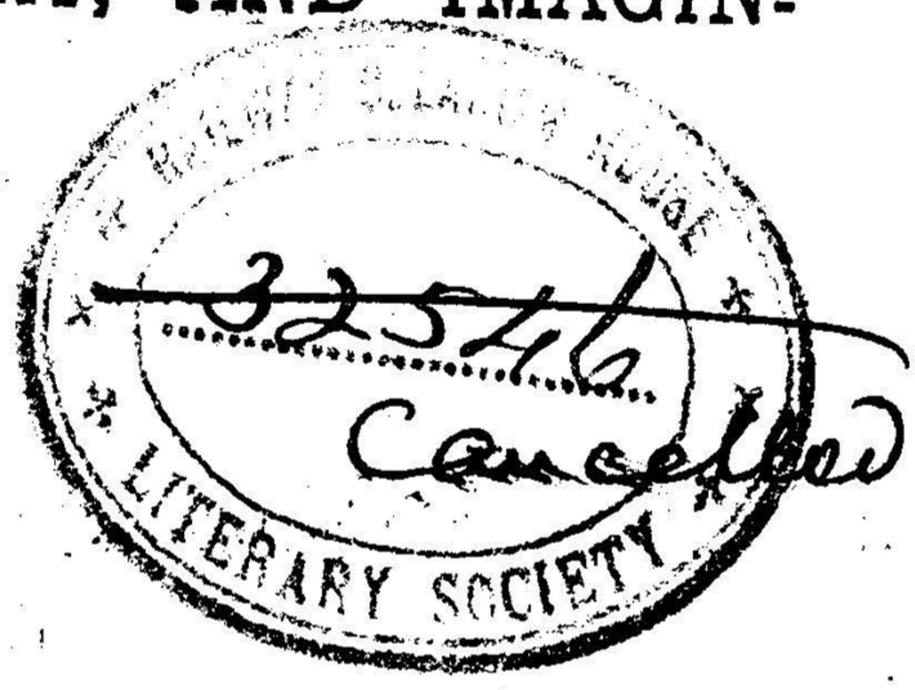
WILSON'S TALES OF THE BORDERS, AND OF SCOTLAND. HISTORICAL, TRADITIONARY, AND IMAGINATIVE.



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"I ne'er was a great traveller," David was wont to begin: "through the length o' Edinburgh, and as far south as Newcastle, is a' that my legs ken about geography. But I've had a good deal o' crooks and thraws, and ups and downs, in the world for a' that. My faither was in the droving line, and lived in the parish o' Coldstream. He did a good deal o' business, baith about the fairs on the Borders, at Edinburgh market every week, and sometimes at Morpeth. He was a bachelor till he was five-and-forty, and he had a very decent lass keep'd his house, they ca'd Kirsty Simson. Kirsty was a remarkably weel-faur'd woman, and a number o' the farm lads round about used to come and see her, as weel as trades' chields frae about Coldstream and Birgham—no that she gied them ony encouragement, but that it was her misfortune to hae a gude-looking face. So, there was ae night that my faither cam' hame frae Edinburgh, and, according to his custom, he had a drap in his e'e—yet no sae meikle but that he could see a lad or twa hingin' about the house. He was very angry; and, 'Kirsty,' said he, 'I dinna like thae youngsters to come about the house.'

"'I'm sure, sir,' said she, 'I dinna encourage them.'

"'Weel, Kirsty,' said he, 'if that's the way, if ye hae nae objections, I'll marry ye mysel'.'

"'I dinna see what objections I should hae,' said she, and, without ony mair courtship, in a week or twa they were married; and, in course o' time, I was born. I was sent to school when I was about eight years auld, but my education ne'er got far'er than the rule o' three. Before I was fifteen, I assisted my faither at the markets, and in a short time he could trust me to buy and sell. There was one very dark night in the month o' January, when I was little mair than seven-

teen, my faither and me were gaun to Morpeth, and we were wishing to get forward wi' the beasts as far as Whittingham; but just as we were about half a mile doun the loanin' frae Glanton, it cam' awa ane o' the dreadfu'est storms that e'er mortal was out in. The snaw literally fell in a solid mass, and every now and then the wind cam' roarin' and howlin' frae the hills, and the fury o' the drift was terrible. I was driven stupid and half suffocated. My faither was on a strong mare, and I was on a bit powney; and amang the cattle there was a camstairy three-year-auld bull, that wad neither hup nor drive. We had it tied by the fore-leg and the horns; but the moment the drift broke ower us, the creature grew perfectly unmanageable; forward it wadna gang. My faither had strucken at it, when the mad animal plunged its horns into the side o' the mare, and he fell to the ground. I could just see what had happened, and that was a'. I jumped aff the powney, and ran forward. 'O faither!' says I, 'ye're no hurt, are ye?' He was trying to rise, but before I could reach him—indeed, before I had the words weel out o' my mouth—the animal made a drive at him! 'O Davy!' he cried, and he ne'er spak mair! We generally carried pistols, and I had presence o' mind to draw ane out o' the breast-pocket o' my big coat, and shoot the animal dead on the spot. I tried to raise my faither in my arms, and, dark as it was, I could see his blood upon the snaw—and a dreadfu' sight it was for a son to see! I couldna see where he had been hurt; and still, though he groaned but once, I didna think he was dead, and I strove and strove again to lift him upon the back o' the powney, and take him back to Glanton; but though I fought wi' my heart like to burst a' the time, I couldna accomplish it. 'Oh, what shall I do?' said I, and cried and

shouted for help—for the snaw fell sae fast, and the drift was sae terrible, that I was feared that, even if he werena dead, he wad be smothered and buried up before I could ride to Glanton and back. And, as I cried, our poor dog Rover came couring to my faither's body and licked his hand, and its pitiful howls mingled wi' the shrieks o' the wind. No kennin' what to do, I lifted my faither to the side o' the road, and tried to place him, half sitting like, wi' his back to the drift, by the foot o' the hedge. 'Oh, watch there, Rover,' said I; and the poor dog ran yowlin' to his feet, and did as I desired it. I sprang upon the back o' the powney, and flew up to the town. Within five minutes I was back, and in a short time a number o' folk wi' lichts cam' to our assistance. My faither was covered wi' blood, but without the least sign o' life. I thought my heart wad break, and for a time my screams were heard aboon the ragin' o' the storm. My faither was conveyed up to the inn, and, on being stripped, it was found that the horn o' the animal had entered his back below the left shouther; and when a doctor frae Alnwick saw the body next day, he said he must have died instantly—and, as I have told ye, he never spoke, but just cried, 'O Davy!'

"My feelings were in such a state that I couldna write mysel', and I got a minister to send a letter to my mother, puir woman, stating what had happened. An acquaintance o' my faither's looked after the cattle, and disposed o' them at Morpeth; and I, having hired a hearse at Alnwick, got the body o' my faither taen hame. A sorrowfu' hame-gaun it was, ye may weel think. Before ever we reached the house, I heard the shrieks o' my puir mither. 'O my faitherless bairn!' she cried, as I entered the door; but before she could rise to meet me, she got a glent o' the coffin which

they were takin' out o' the hearse, and utterin' a sudden scream, her head fell back, and she gaed clean awa.

"After my faither's funeral, we found that he had died worth only about four hundred pounds when his debts were paid; and as I had been bred in the droving line, though I was rather young, I just continued it, and my mother and me kept house thegither.

"This was the only thing particular that happened to me for the next thirteen years, or till I was thirty. My mother still kept the house, and I had nae thoughts o' marrying: no but that I had gallanted a wee bit wi' the lasses now and then, but it was naething serious, and was only to be neighbour-like. I had ne'er seen ane that I could think o' takin' for better for warse; and, anither thing, if I had seen ane to please me, I didna think my mother would be comfortable wi' a young wife in the house. Weel, ye see, as I was telling ye, things passed on in this way till I was thirty, when a respectable flesher in Edinburgh that I did a good deal o' business wi', and that had just got married, says to me in the Grassmarket ae day: 'Davy,' says he, 'ye're no gaun out o' the toun the night—will ye come and tak' tea and supper wi' the wife and me, and a freend or twa?'

"'I dinna care though I do,' says I; 'but I'm no just in a tea-drinkin' dress.'

"'Ne'er mind the dress,' says he. So, at the hour appointed, I stepped awa ower to Hanover Street, in the New Town, where he lived, and was shown into a fine carpeted room, wi' a great looking-glass, in a gilt frame, ower the chimley-piece—ye could see yoursel' at full length in't the moment you entered the door. I was confounded at the carpets and the glass, and a sofa, nae less; and, thinks I, 'This shows what kind o' bargains ye get frae me.' There were three or four

leddies sitting in the room; and 'Mr. Stuart, leddies,' said the flesher; 'Mr. Stuart, Mrs. So-and-so,' said he again—'Miss Murray, Mr. Stuart.' I was like to drap at the impudence o' the creatur—he handed me about as if I had been a bairn at a dancin' school. 'Your servant, leddies,' said I; and didna ken where to look, when I got a glimpse o' my face in the glass, and saw it was as red as crimson. But I was mair than ever put about when the tea was brought in, and the creatur says to me, 'Mr. Stuart, will you assist the leddies?' 'Confound him,' thought I, 'has he brought me here to mak' a fule o' me!' I did attempt to hand round the tea and toast, when, wi' downright confusion, I let a cup fall on Miss Murray's gown. I could have died wi' shame. 'Never mind—never mind, sir!' said she; 'there is no harm done;' and she spoke sae proper and sae kindly, I was in love wi' her very voice. But when I got time to observe her face, it was a perfect picture; and through the hale night after, I could do naething but look at and think o' Miss Murray.

"'Man,' says I to the flesher the next time I saw him, 'wha was yon Miss Murray?' 'No match for a Grassmarket dealer, Davy,' says he. 'I was thinkin' that,' says I; 'but I wad like to be acquainted wi' her.' 'Ye shall be that,' says he; and, after that, there was seldom a month passed that I was in Edinburgh but I saw Miss Murray. But as to courtin', that was out o' the question.

"A short time after this, a relation o' my mither's, wha had been a merchant in London, dee'd, and it was said we were his nearest heirs; and that as he had left nae will, if we applied, we would get the property, which was worth about five thousand pounds. Weel, three or four years passed awa, and we heard something about the lawsuit, but naething about the money. I

was vexed for having onything to say to it. I thought it was only wasting a candle to chase a will-o'-the-wisp. About the time I speak o', my mither had turned very frail. I saw there was a wastin' awa o' nature, and she wadna be lang beside me. The day before her death, she took my hand, and 'Davy,' says she to me—'Davy,' poor body, she repeated (I think I hear her yet)—'it wad been a great comfort to me if I had seen ye settled wi' a decent partner before I dee'd; but it's no to be.'

"Weel, as I was saying, my mither dee'd, and I found the house very dowie without her. It wad be about three months after her death—I had been at Whitsunbank; and when I cam' hame, the servant lassie put a letter into my hands; and 'Maister,' says she, 'there's a letter—can it be for you, think ye?' It was directed, 'David Stuart, *Esquire* (nae less), for ———, by Coldstream.' So I opened the seal, and, to my surprise and astonishment, I found it was frae the man o' business I had employed in London, stating that I had won the law-plea, and that I might get the money whene'er I wanted it. I sent for the siller the very next post. Now, ye see, I was sick and tired o' being a bachelor. I had lang wished to be settled in a comfortable matrimonial way—that is, frae e'er I had seen Miss Murray. But, ye see, while I was a drover, I was very little at hame—indeed I was waur than an Arawbian—and had very little peace or comfort either, and I thought it was nae use takin' a wife until something better might cast up. But this wasna the only reason. There wasna a woman on earth that I thought I could live happy wi' but Miss Murray, and she belanged to a genteel family: whether she had ony siller or no, I declare, as I'm to be judged hereafter, I never did inquire. But I saw plainly it wadna do for a rough

country drover, jauped up to the very elbows, and sportin' a handfu' o' pound-notes the day, and no' worth a penny the morn—I say, I saw plainly it wadna do for the like o' me to draw up by her elbow, and say 'Here's a fine day, ma'am,' or, 'Hae ye ony objections to a walk?' or something o' that sort. But it was weel on for five years since I had singled her out; and though I never said a word anent the subject o' matrimony, yet I had reason to think she had a shrewd guess that my heart louped quicker when she opened her lips than if a regiment o' infantry had stealed behint me unobserved, and fired their muskets ower my shouther; and I sometimes thought that her een looked as if she wished to say, 'Are ye no gaun to ask me, David?'

"But still, when I thought she had been brought up a leddy in a kind o' manner, I durstna venture to mint the matter; but I was fully resolved and determined, should I succeed in getting the money I was trying for, to break the business clean aff hand. So, ye see, as soon as I got the siller, what does I do but sits down and writes her a letter—and sic a letter! I tauld her a' my mind as freely as though I had been speakin' to you. Weel, ye see, I gaed bang through to Edinburgh at ance, no three days after my letter; and up I goes to the Lawnmarket, where she was living wi' her mother, and raps at the door without ony ceremony. But when I had rapped, I was in a swither whether to staun till they came out or no, for my heart began to imitate the knocker, or rather to tell me how I ought to have knocked; for it wasna a loud, solid drover's knock like mine, but it kept rit-tit-tatting on my breast like the knock of a hairdresser's 'prentice bringing a bandbox fu' o' curls and ither knick-knackeries, for a leddy to pick and choose on for a fancy ball; and my face lowed as though ye were

haudin' a candle to it; when out comes the servant, and I stammers out, 'Is your mistress in?' says I. 'Yes, sir,' says she; 'walk in.' And in I walked; but I declare I didna ken whether the floor carried me, or I carried the floor; and wha should I see but an auld leddy wi' spectacles—the maiden's mistress, sure enough, though no mine, but my mother-in-law that was to be. So she looked at me, and I looked at her. She made a low curtsey, and I tried to mak' a bow; while all the time ye might hae heard my heart beatin' at the opposite side o' the room. 'Sir,' says she. 'Ma'am,' says I. I wad hae jumped out o' the window had it no been four stories high; but since I've gane this far, I maun say something, thinks I. 'I've ta'en the liberty o' callin', ma'am,' says I. 'Very happy to see ye, sir,' says she. Weel, thinks I, I'm glad to hear that, however; but had it been to save my life, I didna ken what to say next. So I sat down; and at length I ventured to ask, 'Is your daughter, Miss Jean, at hame, ma'am?' says I. 'I wate she is,' quo' she. 'Jean!' she cried wi' a voice that made the house a' dirl again. 'Comin', mother,' cried my flower o' the forest; and in she cam', skippin' like a perfect fairy. But when she saw me, she started as if she had seen an apparition, and coloured up to the very e'ebrows. As for me, I trembled like an ash leaf, and stepped forward to meet her. I dinna think she was sensible o' me takin' her by the hand; and I was just beginning to say again, 'I've taken the liberty,' when the auld wife had the sense and discretion to leave us by our-sel's. I'm sure and certain I never experienced such a relief since I was born. My head was absolutely ringing wi' dizziness and love. I made twa or three attempts to say something grand, but I never got half-a-dozen words out; and finding it a' nonsense, I threw

my arms around her waist, and pressed her beatin' breast to mine, and stealing a hearty kiss, the whole story that I had made such a wark about was ower in a moment. She made a wee bit fuss, and cried 'Oh fie!' and 'Sir!' or something o' that kind; but I held her to my breast, declaring my intentions manfully—that I had been dying for her for five years, and now that I was a gentleman, I thought I might venture to speak. In fact, I held her in my arms until she next door to said 'Yes!'

"Within a week we had a'thing settled. I found out she had nae fortune. Her mother belanged to a kind o' auld family, that, like mony ithers, cam' down the brae wi' Prince Charles, poor fallow; and they were baith rank Episcopawlians. I found the mither had just sae muckle a year frae some o' her far-awa relations; and had it no been that they happened to ca' me Stuart, and I tauld her a rigmarole about my grandfaither and Culloden, so that she soon made me out a pedigree, about which I kenned nae mair than the man o' the moon, but keept saying 'yes' and 'certainly' to a' she said—I say, but for that, and confound me, if she wadna hae curled up her nose at me and my five thousand pounds into the bargain, though her lassie should hae starved. But Jeannie was a perfect angel. She was about two or three and thirty, wi' light brown hair, hazel e'en, and a waist as jimp and sma' as ye ever saw upon a human creature. She dressed maist as plain as a Quakeress, but was a pattern o' neatness. Indeed, a blind man might seen she was a leddy born and bred; and then for sense, haud at ye there, I wad matched her against the minister and the kirk elders put thegither. But she took that o' her mither; o' whom mair by-and-by.

"As I was saying, she was an Episcopawlian,—a

downright, open-day defender o' Archbishop Laud and the bloody Claverhouse; and she wished to prove down through me the priority and supremacy o' bishops ower presbyteries,—just downright nonsense, ye ken; but there's nae accounting for sooperstition. A great deal depends on how a body's brought up. But what vexed me maist was to think that she wad be gaun to ae place o' public worship on the Sabbath, and me to anither, just like twa strangers; and maybe if her minister preached half an hour langer than mine, or mine half an hour langer than hers, or when we had nae intermission, then there was the denner spoiled, and the servant no kenned what time to hae it ready; for the mistress said ane o'clock, and the maister said twa o'clock. Now, I wadna gie tippence for a cauld denner.

"But, as I was telling ye about the auld wife, she thocht fit to read baith us a bit o' a lecture.

"'Now, bairns,' said she, 'I beseech ye, think weel what ye are about; for it were better to rue at the very foot o' the altar, than to rue it but ance afterwards, and that ance be for ever. I dinna say this to cast a damp upon your joy, nor that I doubt your affection for ane another; but I say it as ane who has been a wife, and seen a good deal o' the world; an,' oh bairns! I say it as a *mother!* Marriage without love is like the sun in January—often clouded, often trembling through storms, but aye without heat; and its pillow is comfortless as a snow-wreath. But although love be the principal thing, remember it is not the only thing necessary. Are ye sure that ye are perfectly acquainted wi' each other's characters and tempers? Aboon a', are ye sure that ye esteem and respect ane anither? Without this, and ye may think that ye like each other, but it's no real love. It's no that kind o' liking that's

to last through married years, and be like a singing bird in your breasts to the end o' your days. No, Jeannie, unless your very souls be, as it were, cemented thegither, unless ye see something in him that ye see in naebody else, and unless he sees something in you that he sees in naebody else, dinna marry still. Passionate lovers dinna aye mak' affectionate husbands. Powder will bleeze fiercely awa in a moment; but the smotherin' peat retains fire and heat among its very ashes. Remember that, in baith man and woman, what is passion to-day may be disgust the morn. Therefore, think now; for it will be ower late to think o' my advice hereafter.'

"'Troth, ma'am,' said I, 'and I'm sure I'll be very proud to ca' sic a sensible auld body *mither!*'

"'Rather may ye be proud to call my bairn your *wife*,' said she; 'for, where a man ceases to be proud o' his wife, upon all occasions, and at all times, or where a wife has to blush for her husband, ye may say fareweel to their happiness. However, David,' continued she, 'I dinna doubt but ye will mak' a gude husband; for ye're a sensible, and I really think a deservin' lad; and were it nae mair than your name, the name o' Stuart wad be a passport to my heart. There's but ae thing that I'm feared on—just ae fault that I see in ye; indeed I may say it's the beginning o' a' ithers, and I wad fain hae ye promise to mend it; for it has brought mair misery upon the marriage state than a' the sufferings o' poverty and the afflictions o' death put thegither.'

"'Mercy me, ma'am!' exclaimed I, 'what de ye mean? Ye've surely been misinformed.'

"'I've observed it mysel', David,' said she seriously.

"'Goodness, ma'am! ye confound me!' says I; 'if it's onything that's bad, I'll deny it point blank.'

"'Ye mayna think it bad,' says she again, 'but I fear ye like a *dram*, and my bairn's happiness demands that I should speak o' it.'

"'A dram!' says I; 'preserve us! is there ony ill in a *dram?*—that's the last thing that I wad hae thought about.'

"'Ask the broken-hearted wife,' says she, 'if there be ony ill in a dram—ask the starving family—ask the jailer and the gravedigger—ask the doctor and the minister o' religion—ask where ye see roups o' furniture at the cross, or the auctioneer's flag wavin' frae the window—ask a deathbed—ask eternity, David Stuart, and they will tell ye if there be ony ill in a dram.'

"'I hope, ma'am,' says I,—and I was a guid deal nettled,—'I hope, ma'am, ye dinna tak' me to be a drunkard. I can declare freely, that unless maybe at a time by chance (and the best o' us will mak' a slip now and then), I never tak' aboon twa or three glasses at a time. Indeed, three's just my set. I aye say to my cronies, there is nae luck till the second tumbler, and nae peace after the fourth. So ye perceive, there's not the smallest danger o' me.'

"'Ah, but, David,' replied she, 'there *is* danger. Habits grow stronger, nature weaker, and resolution offers less and less resistance; and ye may come to make four, five, or six glasses your set; and frae that to a bottle—your grave—and my bairn a broken-hearted widow.'

"'Really, ma'am,' says I, 'ye talked very sensibly before, but ye are awa wi' the harrows now—quite unreasonable a'thegither. However, to satisfy ye upon that score, I'll mak' a vow this very moment, that, except'——

"'Mak' nae rash vows,' says she; 'for a breath mak's them, and less than a breath unmak's them.

But mind that, while ye wad be comfortable wi' your cronies, my bairn wad be frettin' her lane; and though she might say naething when ye cam hame, that wadna be the way to wear her love round your neck like a chain of gold; but, night after night, it wad break away link by link, till the whole was lost; and if ye didna hate, ye wad soon find ye were disagreeable to each other. Nae true woman will condescend to love ony man lang, wha can find society he prefers to hers in an alehouse. I dinna mean to say that ye should never enter a company; but dinna mak' a practice o't.'

"Weel, the wedding morning cam, and I really thocht it was a great blessin' folk hadna to be married every day. My neckcloth wadna tie as it used to tie, and but that I wadna swear at onybody on the day o' my marriage, I'm sure I wad hae wished some ill wish on the fingers o' the laundress. She had starched the muslins!—a circumstance, I am perfectly certain, unheard of in the memory o' man, and a thing which my mother ne'er did. It was stiff, crumpled, and clumsy. I vowed it was insupportable. It was within half an hour o' the time o' gaun to the chapel. I had tried a 'rose-knot,' a 'witch-knot,' a 'chaise-driver's knot,' and a 'running-knot,' wi' every kind o' knot that fingers could twist the neckcloth into, but the confounded starch made every ane look waur than anither. Three neckcloths I had rendered unwearable, and the fourth I tied in a 'beau-knot' in despair. The frill o' my sark-breast wadna lie in the position in which I wanted it! For the first time my very hair rose in rebellion—it wadna lie right; and I cried, 'The mischief tak' the barber!' The only part o' my dress wi' which I was satisfied, was a spotless pair o' nankeen pantaloons. I had a dog they ca'ed Mettle—it was a

son o' poor Rover, that I mentioned to ye before. Weel, it had been raining through the night, and Mettle had been out in the street. The instinct o' the poor dumb brute was puzzled to comprehend the change that had recently taken place in my appearance and habits, and its curiosity was excited. I was sitting before the looking-glass, and had just finished tying my cravat, when Mettle cam bouncing into the room; he looked up in my face inquisitively, and, to unriddle mair o' the matter, placed his unwashed paws upon my unsoiled nankeens. Every particular claw left its ugly impression. It was provoking beyond endurance. I raised my hand to strike him, but the poor brute wagged his tail, and I only pushed him down, saying, 'Sorrow tak' ye, Mettle, do ye see what ye've dune?' So I had to gang to the kitchen fire and stand before it to dry the damp, dirty footprints o' the offender. I then found that the waistcoat wadna sit without wrinkles, such as I had ne'er seen before upon a waistcoat o' mine. The coat, too, was insupportably tight below the arms; and, as I turned half round before the glass, I saw that it hung loose between the shouthers! 'As sure as a gun,' says I, 'the stupid soul o' a tailor has sent me hame the coat o' a humph-back in a mistak'!' My hat was fitted on in every possible manner, ower the brow and aff the brow, now straight, now cocked to the right side and again to the left, but to no purpose; I couldna place it to look like mysel', or as I wished. But half-past eight chimed frae St. Giles'. I had ne'er before spent ten minutes to dress, shaving included, and that morning I had begun at seven! There was not another moment to spare; I let my hat fit as it would, seized my gloves, and rushed down stairs, and up to the Lawnmarket, where I knocked joyfully at the door o' my bonny bride.

"When we were about to depart for the chapel, the auld leddy rose to gie us her blessing, and placed Jeannie's hand within mine. She shed a few quiet tears (a common circumstance wi' mithers on similar occasions); and 'Now, Jeannie,' said she, 'before ye go, I have just anither word or twa to say to ye'——

"'Dearsake, ma'am!' said I, for I was out o' a' patience, 'we'll do very weel wi' what we've heard just now, and ye can say onything ye like when we come back.'

"There was only an elderly gentleman and a young leddy accompanied us to the chapel; for Jeannie and her mother said that that was mair genteel than to have a gilravish o' folk at our heels. For my part, I thought, as we were to be married, we micht as weel mak' a wedding o't. I, however, thought it prudent to agree to their wish, which I did the mair readily, as I had nae particular acquaintance in Edinburgh. The only point that I wad not concede was being conveyed to the chapel in a coach. That my plebeian blood, notwithstanding my royal name o' Stuart, could not overcome. 'Save us a'!' said I, 'if I wadna *walk* to be married, what in the three kingdoms wad tempt me to walk?'

"'Weel,' said the auld leddy, 'my daughter will be the first o' our family that ever gaed on foot to the altar.'

"'An' I assure ye, ma'am,' said I, 'that I would be the first o' my family that ever gaed in ony ither way; and, in my opinion, to gang on foot shows a demonstration o' affection and free-will, whereas gaun in a carriage looks as if there were unwillingness or compulsion in the matter.' So she gied up the controversy. Weel, the four o' us walked awa doun the Lawnmarket and High Street, and turned into a close by the tap o' the Canongate, where the Episcopawlian chapel was

situated. For several days I had read ower the marriage service in the prayer-book, in order to master the time to say 'I will,' and other matters. Nevertheless, no sooner did I see the white gown of the clergyman, and feel Jeannie's hand trembling in mine, than he micht as weel hae spoken in Gaelic. I mind something about the ring, and, when the minister was done, I whispered to the best man, 'It's a' ower now?' 'Yes,' said he. 'Heeven be thankit!' thought I.

"Weel, ye see, after being married, and as I had been used to an active life a' my days, I had nae skill in gaun about like a gentleman wi' my hands in my pockets, and I was anxious to tak' a farm. But Jeannie did not like the proposal, and my mother-in-law wadna hear tell o't; so, by her advice, I put out the money, and we lived upon the interest. For six years everything gaed straight, and we were just as happy and as comfortable as a family could be. We had three bairns: the eldest was a daughter, and we ca'ed her Margaret, after her grandmother, who lived wi' us; the second was a son, and I named him Andrew, after my faither; and our third, and youngest, we ca'ed Jeannie, after her mother. They were as clever, bonnie, and obedient bairns as ye could see, and everybody admired them. There was ane Luckie Macnaughton kept a tavern in Edinburgh at the time. A' sort o' respectable folk used to frequent the house, and I was in the habit o' gaun at night to smoke my pipe and hear the news about Bonaparte and the rest o' them; but it was very seldom that I exceeded three tumblers. Weel, among the customers there was ane that I had got very intimate wi'—as genteel and decent a looking man as ye could see; indeed I took him to be a particular serious and honest man. So there was ae night that I was rather mair than ordinary hearty, and says he to me: 'Mr Stuart,' says he, 'will

you lend your name to a bit paper for me?' 'No, I thank ye, sir,' says I; 'I never wish to be caution for onybody.' 'It's of no consequence,' said he, and there was no more passed. But as I was rising to gang hame, 'Come, tak' anither, Mr Stuart,' said he; 'I'm next the wa' wi' ye—I'll stand treat.' Wi' sair pressing I was prevailed upon to sit doun again, and we had anither and anither, till I was perfectly insensible. What took place, or how I got hame, I couldna tell, and the only thing I remember was a head fit to split the next day, and Jeannie very ill pleased and powty-ways. However, I thought nae mair about it, and I was extremely glad I had refused to be bond for the person who asked me; for within three months I learned that he had broken and absconded wi' a vast o' siller. It was just a day or twa after I had heard the intelligence, I was telling Jeannie and her mother o' the circumstance, and what an escape I had had, when the servant lassie showed a bank clerk into the room. 'Tak' a seat, sir,' said I, for I had dealings wi' the bank. 'This is a bad business, Mr. Stuart,' said he. 'What business?' said I, quite astonished. 'Your being security for Mr. So-and-so,' said he. 'Me!' cried I, starting up in the middle o' the floor—'Me!—the scoundrel—I denied him point blank!' 'There is your own signature for a thousand pounds,' said the clerk. 'A thousand furies!' exclaimed I, stamping my foot; 'it's a forgery—an infernal forgery!' 'Mr. Such-a-one is witness to your handwriting,' said the clerk. I was petrified; I could hae drawn down the roof o' the house upon my head to bury me! In a moment a confused recollection o' the proceedings at Luckie Macnaughton's flashed across my memory, like a flame from the bottomless pit! There was a look o' witherin' reproach in my mother-in-law's een, and I heard her mutterin' between her teeth, 'I aye said

what his three tumblers wad come to.' But my dear Jeannie bore it like a Christian, as she is. She cam forward to me, an', poor thing, she kissed my cheek, and says she, 'Dinna distress yoursel', David, dear—it cannot be helped now—let us pray that this may be a lesson for the future.' I flung my arm round her neck—I couldna speak; but at last I said, 'Oh Jeannie, it will be a lesson, and your affection will be a lesson!' Some o' your book-learned folk wad ca' this conduct philosophy in Jeannie; but I, wha kenned every thought in her heart, was aware that it proceeded from her resignation as a true Christian, and her affection as a dutiful wife. Weel, the upshot was, I had robbed mysel' out o' a thousand pounds as simply as ye wad snuff out a candle. You have heard the saying, that sorrow ne'er comes singly; and I am sure, in a' my experience, I have found its truth. At that period I had twa thousand pounds, bearing six per cent., lying in the hands o' a gentleman o' immense property. Everybody believed him to be as sure as the bank. Scores o' folk had money in his hands. The interest was paid punctually, and I hadna the least suspicion. Weel, I was looking ower the papers one morning at breakfast, and I happened to glance at the list o' bankrupts (a thing I'm no in the habit o' doing), when, mercy me! whose name should I see but the very gentleman's that had my twa thousand pounds! I had the paper in one hand and a saucer in the other. The saucer and the coffee gaed smash upon the hearth! I trembled frae head to foot. 'Oh David! what's the matter?' cried Jeannie. 'Matter!' cried I; 'matter! I'm ruined!—we're a' ruined!' But it's o' nae use dwelling on this. The fallow didna pay eighteenpence to the pound; and there was three thousand gaen out o' my five! It was nae use, wi' a young family, to talk o' living on the interest o' our money now.

'We maun tak' a farm,' says I; and baith Jeannie and her mother saw there was naething else for it. So I took a farm which lay partly in the Lammermoors and partly in the Merse. It took the thick end o' eight hundred pounds to stock it. However, we were very comfortable in it; I found mysel' far mair at hame than I had been in Edinburgh; for I had employment for baith mind and hands, and Jeannie very soon made an excellent farmer's wife. Auld grannie, too, said she never had been sae happy; and the bairns were as healthy as the day was lang. We couldna exactly say that we were making what ye may ca' siller, yet we were losing nothing, and every year laying by a little. There was a deepish burn ran near the onstead. We had been about three years in the farm, and our youngest lassie was about nine years auld. It was the summer time, and she had been paidling in the burn, and sooming feathers and bits o' sticks; I was looking after something that had gaen wrang about the threshin' machine, when I heard an unco noise get up, and bairns screamin'. I looked out, and I saw them runnin' and shoutin' —'Miss Jeannie! Miss Jeannie!' I rushed out to the barnyard. 'What is't, bairns?' cried I. 'Miss Jeannie! Miss Jeannie!' said they, pointing to the burn. I flew as fast as my feet could carry me. The burn, after a spate on the hills, often cam awa in a moment wi' a fury that naething could resist. The flood had come awa upon my bairn; and there, as I ran, did I see her bonnie yellow hair whirled round and round, sinking out o' my sight, and carried awa doun wi' the stream. There was a linn about thirty yards frae where I saw her, and oh! how I rushed to snatch a grip o' her before she was carried ower the rocks! But it was in vain—a moment sooner, and I might hae saved her; but she was hurled ower the precipice when I was within an arm's length,

and making a grasp at her bit frock! My poor little Jeannie was baith felled and drowned. I plunged into the wheel below the linn, and got her out in my arms. I ran wi' her to the house, and I laid my drowned bairn on her mother's knee. Everything that could be done was done, and a doctor was brought frae Dunse; but the spark o' life was out o' my bit Jeannie. I felt the bereavement very bitterly; and for many a day, when Margaret and Andrew sat down at the table by our sides, my heart filled; for as I was helpin' their plates, I wad put out my hand again to help anither, but there was nae ither left to help. But Jeannie took our bairn's death far sairer to heart than even I did. For several years she never was hersel' again, and just seemed dwinin' awa. Sea-bathing was strongly recommended; and as she had a friend in Portobello, I got her to gang there for a week or twa during summer. Our daughter Margaret was now about eighteen, and her brother Andrew about fifteen; and as I thought it would do them good, I allowed them to gang wi' their mither to the bathing. They were awa for about a month, and I firmly believe that Jeannie was a great deal the better o't. But it was a dear bathing to me on mony accounts for a' that. Margaret was an altered lassie a'thegither. She used to be as blithe as a lark in May, and now there was nae gettin' her to do onything; but she sat couring and unhappy, and seighin' every handel-a-while, as though she were miserable. It was past my comprehension, and her mother could assign nae particular reason for it. As for Andrew, he did naething but yammer, yammer, frae morn till night, about the sea; or sail boats, rigged wi' thread and paper sails, in the burn. When he was at the bathing he had been doun aboot Leith, and had seen the ships, and naething wad serve him but he would be a sailor. Night and day did he torment

my life out to set him to sea. But I wadna hear tell o't—his mother was perfectly wild against it, and poor auld grannie was neither to haud nor to bind. We had suffered enough frae the burn at our door, without trusting our only son upon the wide ocean. However, all we could say had nae effect—the craik was never out o' his head; and it was still, 'I will be a sailor.' Ae night he didna come in as usual for his four-hours, and supper time cam, and we sent a' round about to seek him, but naebody had heard o' him. We were in unco distress, and it struck me at ance that he had run to sea. I saddled my horse that very night and set out for Leith, but could get nae trace o' him. This was a terrible trial to us, and ye may think what it was when I tell ye it was mair than a twelvemonth before we heard tell o' him; and the first accounts we had was a letter by his ain hand, written frae Bengal. We had had a cart down at Dunse for some bits o' things, and the lad brought the letter in his pocket; and weel do I mind how Jeannie cam' fleein' wi' it open in her hand across the fields to where I was looking after some workers thinnin' turnips, crying, 'David! David! here's a letter frae Andrew!' 'Read it! read it!' cried I, for my een were blind wi' joy. But Andrew's rinnin' awa wasna the only trial that we had to bear up against at this time. As I was tellin' ye, there was an unco change ower Margaret since she had come frae the bathin'; and a while after, a young lad that her mother said they had met wi' at Portobello began to come about the house. He was the son o' a merchant in Edinburgh, and pretended that he had come to learn to be a farmer wi' a neighbour o' ours. He was a wild, thoughtless, foppish-looking lad, and I didna like him; but Margaret, silly thing, was clean daft about him. Late and early I found him about the house, and I tauld

him I couldna allow him nor ony person to be within my doors at any such hours. Weel, this kind o' wark was carried on for mair than a year; and a' that I could say or do, Margaret and him were never separate; till at last he drapped off comin' to the house, and our daughter did naething but seigh and greet. I found that, after bringing her to the point o' marriage, he either wadna or durstna fulfil his promise unless I wad pay into his loof a thousand pounds as her portion. I could afford my daughter nae sic sum, and especially no to be thrown awa on the like o' him. But Jeannie cam to me wi' the tears on her cheeks, and 'O David!' says she, 'there's naething for it but partin' wi' a thousand pounds on the ae hand or our bairn's death—and her—shame on the ither!' Oh! if a knife had been driven through my heart, it couldna pierced it like the word *shame!* As a faither, what could I do? I paid him the money, and they were married.

"It's o' nae use tellin' ye how I gaed back in the farm. In the year sixteen my crops warna worth takin' aff the ground, and I had twa score o' sheep smothered the same winter. I fell behint wi' my rent; and household furniture, farm-stock, and everything I had, were to be sold off. The day before the sale, wi' naething but a bit bundle carrying in my hand, I took Jeannie on my ae arm and her puir auld mither on the other, and wi' a sad and sorrowfu' heart we gaed out o' the door o' the hame where our bairns had been brought up, and a sheriff's officer steeked it behint us. Weel, we gaed to Coldstream, and we took a bit room there, and furnished it wi' a few things that a friend bought back for us at our sale. We were very sair pinched. Margaret's gudeman ne'er looked near us, nor rendered us the least assistance, and she hadna it in her power. There was nae ither alternative that I

could see; and I was just gaun to apply for labouring wark when we got a letter frae Andrew, enclosing a fifty-pound bank-note. Mony a tear did Jeannie and me shed ower that letter. He informed us that he had been appointed mate o' an East Indiaman, and begged that we would keep ourselves easy; for while he had a sixpence, his faither and mither should hae the half o't. Margaret's husband very soon squandered away the money he had got frae me, as weel as the property he had got frae his faither; and, to escape the jail, he ran off, and left his wife and family. They cam to stop wi' me; and for five years we heard naething o' him. We had begun a shop in the spirit and grocery line, and really we were remarkably fortunate. It was about six years after I had begun business, ae night just after the shop was shut, Jeannie and her mother, wha was then about ninety, and Margaret and her bairns, and mysel', were a' sittin' round the fire, when a rap cam to the door; ane o' the bairns ran and opened it, and twa gentlemen cam in. Margaret gied a shriek, and ane o' them flung himsel' at her feet. 'Mother! faither!' said the other, 'do ye no ken me?' It was our son Andrew, and Margaret's gudeman! I jamp up, and Jeannie jamp up; auld grannie raise totterin' to her feet, and the bairns screamed, puir things. I got haud o' Andrew, and his mother got haud o' him, and we a' grat wi' joy. It was such a night o' happiness as I had never kenned before. Andrew had been made a ship captain. Margaret's husband had repented o' a' his follies, and was in a good way o' doing in India; and everything has gane right and prospered wi' our whole family frae that day to this."

called Middleton's Entry, which joins the dark street called the Potterrow, and Bristo Street, the inhabitants were roused into surprise, if not a feeling approaching to horror, by the discovery that a woman, who had lived for a period of fifteen years in a solitary room at the top of one of the tenements, had been found in bed dead. A doctor was called, but before he came it was concluded by those who had assembled in the small room that she had died from want of food; and such was the fact. The body—that of one not yet much past the middle of life, and with fair complexion and comely features—was so emaciated, that you might have counted the ribs merely by the eye; and all those parts where the bones are naturally near the surface exhibited a sharpness which suggested the fancy, that as you may see a phosphorescent skeleton through the glow, you beheld in the candle-light the figure of death under the thin covering of the bones. She realized, in short, the description which doctors give of the appearance of those unfortunate beings who die of what is technically called *atrophia familicorum*—that Nemesis of civilisation which points scornfully to the victim of want, and then looks round on God's bountiful table, set for the meanest of his creatures. So we may indite; but rhetoric, which is useless where the images cannot rise to the dignity or descend to the humiliation of the visible fact, must always come short of the effect of the plain words that a human creature—perhaps good and amiable and delicate to that shyness which cannot complain—has died in the very midst of a proclaimed philanthropy, and within the limits of a space comprehending smoking tables covered with luxuries, and surrounded by Christian men and women filled with meat and drink to repletion and satiety.

Some such thoughts might have been passing through

the minds of the assembled neighbours; and they could not be said to be the less true that a shrunk and partially-withered right arm showed that the doom of the woman had been so far precipitated by the still remaining effects of an old stroke of palsy. And the gossip confirmed this, going also into particulars of observation,—how she had kept herself so to herself as if she wished to avoid the neighbours,—a fact which to an extent justified their imputed want of attention; how almost the only individual who had visited her was a peculiar being, in the shape of a very little man, with a slight limp and thin pleasant features, illuminated by a pair of dark, penetrating eyes. For years and years had he been seen, always about the same hour of the day, ascending her stair, and carrying a flagon, supposed to contain articles of food. Then the gossiping embraced the furniture and other articles in the room, which, however they might have been unnoticed before, had now assumed the usual interest when seen in the blue light of the acted tragedy: the small mahogany table and the two chairs—how strange that they should be of mahogany!—and some of the few marrowless plates in the rack over the fireplace, why, they were absolute china! but above all, the exquisite little bureau of French manufacture, with its drawers, its desk, and pigeon-holes, and cunning slides—what on earth was it doing in that room, when its value even to a broker would have kept the woman alive for months? Questions these put by a roused curiosity, and perhaps not worth answer. Was not she a woman, and was not that enough?

Not enough; for legendary details cluster round startling events, and often carry a moral which may prevent a repetition of these; and so, had it not been for this apparently inexplicable death by starvation,

our wonderful story might never have gathered listeners round the evening fire. We must go back some twenty years before the date of the said sermon to find a certain merchant-burgess of the city of Edinburgh, David Grierson, occupying a portion of a front land situated in the Canongate, a little to the east of Leith Wynd. It would be sheer affectation in us to pretend that this merchant-burgess had any mental or physical characteristic about him to justify his appearance in a romance, if we except the power he had shown of amassing wealth, of which he had so much that he could boast the possession of more than twenty goodly tenements, some of wood and some of stone, besides shares of ships and bank stock. And no doubt this exception might stand for the thing excepted from, for money, though commonly said to be extraneous, is often so far in its influences intraneous, that it changes the feelings and motives, and enables them to work. And then don't we know that it is by extraneous things we are mostly led? But however all that may be, certain it is that our merchant-burgess was a great man in his own house in the Canongate, where his family consisted of Rachel Grierson, his natural daughter, by a woman who had been long dead, and Walter Grierson, his legitimate nephew, who had been left an orphan in his early years, and who was his nearest lawful heir. Two servants completed the household; and surely in this rather curious combination there might be, if only circumstances were favourable to their development, elements which might impart interest to a story.

So long as the shadow of the dark angel was, as Time counted, far away from him, Burgess David was comparatively happy; but as he got old and older, he began to realize the condition of the poet—

"Now pleasure will no longer please,
And all the joys of life are gone;
I ask no more on earth but ease,
To be at peace, and be alone:
I ask in vain the winged powers
That weave man's destiny on high;
In vain I ask the golden hours
That o'er my head for ever fly."

Then he waxed more and more anxious as to what he was to do with his money. He tried to put away the thought; but the terrible *magistra necessitas* went round and round him with ever-diminishing circles, clearly indicating a conflict in which he must succumb. He must make a will; an act which it is said no man is ever in a hearty condition to perform, unless mayhap he is angry, and wishes to cut off an ungrateful dog with a shilling; and besides the general disinclination to sign the disposal of so much wealth, of which he was more than ordinarily fond, and to give away, as it were, *omnia præter animam*, in the very view of giving away the soul too, he was in a great perplexity as to how to divide his means. Nor could he reconcile himself to a division at all, preferring, as the greatly lesser evil, the alternative of destinating his fortune all of a lump, with some hope of its being kept together. As for Walter, though he had some affection for him, he had not much confidence in him, for he had seen that he was hare-brained as regarded things which suited his fancy, and pig-brained as respected those which solicited and required sound judgment; while Rachel, again, was everything which, among the lower angels, could be comprehended under the delightful title of "dear soul," an amiable and devoted creature, as stedfast in her affections as she was wise in the selection of their objects. So by revolving in his mind

all the beauties of the character of her who, however disqualified by law, was still of his flesh and blood, yea, of his very nature, as he complacently thought in compliment to himself, he became more and more reconciled to his intention, if the very thought of making a will, which had been horrible to him, did not become even a pleasing kind of meditation. So is it—when Nature imposes an inevitable duty, she gives man the power of inventing a pleasing reason for his obedience; nay, so much of a self-dissembler is he, that he even cheats himself into the belief that his obedience is an act of his own will. In all which he at least proved the value of one of the arguments in favour of marriage; for trite it is to say, a bachelor bears to no one a love which reconciles him to will-making, while a father, in leaving his means to his children, feels as if he were giving to himself. But this plan of our merchant-burgess had in addition a spice of ingenuity in it which still more pleased him—he would so contrive matters that the daughter and the nephew would become, after his death, man and wife. He had only some doubts how far their tastes agreed,—probably an absurd condition, in so much as we all know that love is often struck out by opposition, and that there is a pleasant suitability in a husband preferring the head of a herring, and the wife the tail.

Having thus arrived at a sense of his duty by the pleasant path of his affection, Mr. David Grierson seized the first opportunity which presented itself of sounding the heart of Rachel, in order to know in what direction her affections ran. Sitting in his big chair, all so comfortably cushioned by the hands of the said Rachel herself, and with a good fire alongside, due also to her unremitting care, he called her to him, and placing his arm round her waist, as he was often in the habit of doing, said to her—

"Rachel, dear, I feel day by day my strength leaving me, and it may be, nay, will be, that I will not be very much longer with you."

Rachel looked at him for a little, but said nothing, for, as the saying goes, her heart came to her mouth, and she could not have spoken even if she would; but the father understood all this, and preferred the mute expression of a real grief to a hysterical burst—of which, indeed, her calm genial nature was incapable.

"Forgive me, dear," continued he, "for I would not willingly cause you sorrow, but I have a reason for speaking in this grave way. Who is to fill the old arm-chair when I cannot occupy it?"

And he smiled somewhat grimly as he sought her eye, in which he could observe the most real of all nature's evidences of emotion.

"What mean you, father?" she replied, with something like an effort to respond to his humour.

"Why, then, Rachel," he said, "to be out with it, I want to know whether you have fixed your heart on any one."

"Only upon you, dear father," she replied, with a smile which struggled against her seriousness.

"Nay, Rachel," continued he. "It is no light matter, and I must have an answer. I intend to leave you my whole fortune, but upon one condition, which is, that if Walter Grierson shall sue for your hand, you will consent to marry him."

To this there was a reply given with an alacrity which showed how her heart pointed—"Yes;" then, adding that wonderful little word "but," which makes such havoc among our resolutions, she paused, while her eyes sought the ground.

"What 'but' can be here?" interiected the old man.

"Surely you do not mean to doubt whether *he* would consent?"

"And yet that is just my doubt," she replied, as if she felt humiliated by the admission.

"Doubt!" cried the father, in rising wrath; "doubt, doubt if a beggar would consent to be made rich by marrying *you!* Why, Rachel, dear, if the fellow were to breathe a sigh of hesitation, he would deserve to be a beggar with more holes than wholes in his gabardine, and too poor even to possess a wallet to carry his bones and crumbs. Have you any reason for your strange statement?"

"No," replied the girl, with a sigh. "It is only my heart that speaks."

"And the heart never lies," said he sharply. "But I shall see," he muttered to himself, "whether a certain tongue in a certain head shall speak in the same way."

"But would it not bring me down," said she, "were he to think that he was forced by a promise?"

"A promise!" rejoined he; "why, so it would, my dear. I see you are right." But then he thought he could sound him without putting any obligation upon him. "And a pretty obligation it would be," he continued, "for a young fellow cut off with a shilling to bind himself to consent to be the acceptor of two such gifts as a fine girl and a fortune."

And Burgess David tried to laugh; but the effort was still that of a heavy heart, and, reclining his head upon the back of the chair, he relapsed into those thoughts which, as Age advances to the term where Hope throws down her lamp, press in and in upon the spirit. Rachel glided away quietly, perhaps to think; and certainly she had something to think about.

So, too, doubtless had Mr. David Grierson, who, after indulging in his reverie, wherein the subject of

will-making suggested a match between himself and a certain bridegroom who never says nay, awoke to the interest of his scheme of match-making in this world. So far he had accomplished his object, for he could rely upon his faithful Rachel's performance of her promise; and if the two should be married, he knew how to take care to give her the power of the money, and keep a youth, in whose prudence he had no great faith, in proper check. Next he had to sound the nephew. Nor was it long before he had an opportunity—even that same afternoon.

"Walter," he began with an abruptness for which probably the young man was scarcely prepared, "I am getting old, and must now think of arranging my affairs so as to endeavour to make my fortune serve the purpose of rendering those happy in whom I have a natural interest. So I have some interest also as well as, I suspect, some right to put the question to you, whether you ever thought of Rachel Grierson for your wife?"

"Upon my word," replied the nephew, with just as little *mauvais honte* as suited his nature, "I never thought of aspiring to the *honour*."

A word this last which grated on the ear of the rich merchant-burgess, inasmuch as it suggested a suspicion of the figure of speech called irony, seeing that Rachel Grierson was a bastard, and the youth carried the legitimate blood of the Griersons in his veins.

"Honour or no honour," replied he sharply, and perhaps contrary to his original intention, "Rachel Grierson is to inherit my fortune, ay, every penny thereof."

"Every penny thereof," echoed the youth, as if his mind had flown away with the words, and dropt them in despair as it flew.

"Yes," rejoined the angry uncle, "lands, tenements,

hereditaments, shares, dividends, stock, furniture, bed and table linen."

"And table linen," echoed the entranced nephew.

"Yes; everything," continued the uncle; and calming down as he saw the white lips and blank despair of the youth, he added—"And to you I will leave and bequeath my natural-born daughter, Rachel Grierson."

And as he uttered these significant words, he watched carefully the face of the youth, where, however, all indications defied his perspicacity, inasmuch as blank astonishment was still the prevailing expression. But after some minutes the young man stuttered out—

"A legacy worthy of a nobleman!"

Words that sounded beautifully, because they were true as regarded Rachel, whatever they might be as respected his secret intention; yet as the children vaticinate from the examination of each other's tongues, if the uncle had examined the organ, he might have discovered some of those blue lines which produce an exclamation from the young augurs.

"*Words* worthy, too, of a nobleman," cried the old man in a trembling voice; and holding out his hand, which shook under his emotion of delight at hearing his beloved Rachel so praised, he seized that of his nephew—

"Yes, Walter," he added, "you have by these words redeemed yourself, and I will take them as an offering of your willingness to accept my legacy; but, remember, I extort no promise, which might reduce the value of a young woman's affection,—a gift to be accepted for its own sake."

"I am content," said Walter.

"And I am satisfied," added the uncle. "But here is wine on the table," he continued, as he turned his eye in the direction of a decanter of good claret, just as

if Rachel had, by her art of love, anticipated what he wished at this moment. "Ah, Walter, if she shall watch your wants as she has done mine, you will live to feel that you cannot want *her*, and live; so fill up a glass for me, and one for yourself, that we may drink to the happiness of the dear girl when, after I am dead, she shall become your wedded wife."

"With all and sundry lands, tenements, hereditaments, and so forth," cried Walter, with a laugh which might pass as genuine, and which was responded to by a chuckle from the dry throat of the uncle, which certainly was so.

So the pledge was taken; and Walter Grierson went away, leaving the old merchant-burgess as happy as any poor mortal creature can be when so near the term of his departure. Such is our way of speaking; and yet we are forced to admit, that at no period of life, however near the ultimate, abating the advent of the great illumination which breaks like a new dawn upon the internal sense of a favoured few, can you say that the hold of this world upon the spirit is ever renounced. Whether the young man was as happy, we may not venture to say; but this we might surmise, even at this stage of our story, and in reference to the classical proverb, that the bastard might be the beautiful Nisa, and the lawful heir the ill-favoured Mopsus.

These things we may leave to development; and with a caution to the reader not to be over-suspicious, we will follow our Nisa, Rachel Grierson, as she proceeds from the house of the merchant-burgess up the High Street, at a period of the evening of the same day when the shadows of the tall lands wrapped the crowds of loiterers and passengers almost in utter darkness; not that she chose this time for any purpose of secrecy, —for she had no secret, except that solitary one which

every young woman has, and holds, up to the minute of conviction, that she is engaged, after which it becomes a flame blown by her own breath,—but simply because it suited the routine of her duties. Her night-cloak kept her from the cold, and the panoply of her virtue secured her from insult; so, threading her way amidst the throng, she arrived at the head of the old winding street called the West Bow, where, at a projection a little to the north of Major Weir's Entry, she mounted a narrow stair. On arriving at a door on the third landing-place, she tapped gently, and in obedience to a shrill voice, which cried "Come in," she lifted the latch, and entered a small room, where, at a bench, sat a very peculiar personage. This was no other than the famous Paul Bennett, an artist in jewellery, who at that time excelled all his compeers for beauty of design and exquisite refinement of minute elaboration. And this, perhaps, a good judge of mankind might have augured of him; for while his body was far below the middle size, his long thin fingers, tapering to a point, seemed to be suitable instruments intended to serve a pair of dark eyes so lustrous and sharp, that nothing within the point of the beginning of infinitesimals might seem to escape them. Nor was his pale face less suggestive of his peculiar faculties; for it was made up of fine delicate features, harmonized into regularity, and so expressive, that it seemed to change with every feeling of the moment, even as the flitting moonbeams play on the face of a statue. In addition to these peculiarities, his appearance was rendered the more striking, that, working as he did under a strong reflected light, cast down immediately before his face by a dark shade, the upper part of his person and a circle on the bench were in bright relief, while the other parts of the room were comparatively dark.

"Still at work, Paul," said Rachel, as she entered; "how long do you intend to work to-night?"

"Till the idea becomes dim, and the sense waxes thick," replied he, as he turned his eyes upon her.

"I have something to tell you," she continued, as she sat down on a chair between him and the fire, if that could be called such which consisted of some red cinders.

"Some other wonder," replied he; "another cropping out of the workings of fate."

Words these, as coming from our little artist, which require some explanation, to the effect that Paul was a philosopher, too, in his own way. Early misfortunes, which mocked the resolutions of a will never very strong, had played into a habit of thinking, and brought him to the conviction that every movement or change in the moral world, not less than in the physical, is the result of a cause which runs back through endless generations to the first man, and even beyond him. Paul was, in short, a fatalist; not of that kind which romance writers feign in order to make the character work through a gloomy presentiment of his own destiny, but merely a believer in a universal original decree, the workings of which we never know until the effects are seen. A fatalist of this kind almost every man is, less or more, in some mood or another; only, to save himself from being a puppet, moved by springs or drawn by strings, he generally contrives to except his *will* from the scheme of the iron-bound necessity. But Paul would permit of no such exception. The will, with him, was merely the *motive in action;* and as he compelled you to admit that no thought is, in man's experience, ever called into being, only developed from prior conditions, and that, even as to an idea, the doctrine *Nihil nisi ex ovo* is true, and therefore that no

man can manufacture a motive, so he took a short way with the maintainers of a moral liberty. This doctrine, so gloomy, so grand, yet so terrible, was, to Paul, a conviction, which he almost made practical; nay, he seemed to realize a kind of poetic pleasure from reveries, which represented to him the universe, with the sun and the stars, and all living creatures—walking, flying, swimming, or crawling—going through their parts in the great melodrama of destiny, no one knowing how, or why, or wherefore, yet every human being believing that he is master of his actions, at the very moment that he might be conscious that his belief is only a part of the great law of necessity. Then it seemed as if this delusion in which men indulge, and are forced to indulge, was an element of the farce introduced into the play, so as to relieve the mind from the heavy burden of contemplating so terrible a theory.

"Something to tell me, Rachel!" continued he; "and what may that be?"

"My father has told me to-day," replied she, "that he is to leave me all his fortune; and however grieved I may be at the thought of losing him, I am glad to think that it may be in my power to be of service to you, Paul, as my only relative on my mother's side."

"Service," muttered Paul to himself, while he looked into her face as wistfully as a lover, which indeed he was, though in secret. "And what is to become of Walter Grierson?" he asked.

"When he finds that the entire fortune is mine," replied she, "he will propose to marry me; and this is what my father wishes to bring about by putting the fortune in my power."

"So the events crop out from the long chain of causes," thought Paul; "but who shall tell the final

issue? Look here, Rachel," he continued, as he laid his hand on a golden locket which lay before him in the shape of a heart, "I have made this to order;" and as he spoke he touched a spring, whereupon a lid opened, and up flew a pair of tiny doves, which, with fluttering wings of gold and azure, immediately saluted each other with their long bills, and piped a few notes in imitation of the cushat. The touch of another spring immediately consigned them again to the cavity of the heart,—a conceit altogether of such refined manufacture and ingenuity of design, as to remind us of the saying of Cicero, that there is an exquisiteness in art which never can be known till it is seen fresh from the hand of genius.

"And who ordered that beautiful thing?" inquired Rachel.

"Walter Grierson," replied Paul, fixing his eyes upon her sorrowfully, as if he felt oppressed by that gloomy theory of his.

Nor did he fail to perceive the effect his few words had produced upon the heart of his cousin, where there was a fluttering very different from that of cooing turtles; for the fate of her happiness seemed to her to be suspended on the answer to a question, and that question she was afraid to put.

"Be patient, and learn to hear," continued the little philosopher. "Ere yet Cheops built the Pyramids, or Joshua commanded the sun to stand still, yea, before the first sensation tingled in the first nerve made out of the dust, the beginnings were laid of these events of this day and hour, and, in particular, of that one which may well astonish you and grieve you —viz., that the locket is intended for and inscribed to Agnes Ainslie."

"Agnes Ainslie!" repeated Rachel, with parched

lips and trembling voice, "the daughter of Mr. John Ainslie, my father's agent, to whom I am even now going, by Mr. Grierson's command, to request him to call to morrow for the purpose of preparing the settlement!"

"A strange perplexity of events," said Paul. "But what is this mingling of threads to the great web of the universe, which is eternally being woven and unwoven, unaffected by the will of man? And then these small issues, the loss of a fortune by a man, and that of a lover by a woman, how mighty they are to the individual hearts and affections!"

"Mighty indeed," sobbed Rachel, who had loved Walter so long, and rejoiced to have it in her power to bestow a fortune upon him, and now found all her hopes dissolved into the ashes of grief and disappointment. "Mighty indeed; and these thoughts of yours are so dreary, how can one believe in them and live!"

"We are compelled to live," replied he, "even by that same decree which binds us to the infinite chain. Were it not so, man would imitate the day-flies, and die at sundown, that he might escape the dark night which reveals to him the mystery of his being, whereat he trembles and sobs; and all this is also in the decree."

"But if all these things are so," said Rachel, "what do you say of happiness? Is there no joy in the world? Are not the birds happy, when in the morning the woods resound with their song, and so, too, every animal after its kind? Are not children joyful when the house rings with their mirth? and have not men and women their pleasures of a thousand kinds? nay, might not I myself have been one of the happiest of beings, if, with the fortune which is to be left to me, that locket had been engraved with the name of Rachel Grierson in place of Agnes Ainslie?"

"Yes," replied he, "happiness is in the decree as well; and," he added with a smile, "it is always cropping out around us, but no one can manufacture the article. If you wait for it, you may feel it; if you run after it, you will probably not find it, because it is not ready by those eternal laws which, at their beginning, involved its coming up at a certain moment of long after-years. Then, at the best, pleasure and pain are mere oscillations; but the first movement is downwards, for we cry when we come into the world; and the last is also downwards, for we groan when we go out of it. It is the old rhyme—

'We scream when we're born,
We groan when we're dying;
And all that's between
Is but laughing and crying.'"

A parade of philosophy all this which at another time might have had but a small effect upon a youthful mind, but Rachel was in the meantime occupied by looking at the inscription on the fatal toy; and we all know that the feeling of the dominant idea of the moment assimilates to its own hue the light or shade of all other ideas of a cognate kind; and there is in this process also a selection and rejection whereby all melancholy ideas cluster in the gloomy atmosphere, if we may so term it, of the prevailing depression, and all joyful ones come together by the attraction of a joyful thought; and so Rachel was impressed by views which, if they had been modified by the comforting doctrines of Christianity, might have enabled her at once to bear and to hope. Even when Paul had finished, she was still gazing on the locket. A moment or two more, and she laid it down with a deep sigh, saying, almost involuntarily, "If my name had been there, I would not have repined at the loss of all my

expected fortune." Then, shaking hands with this peculiar being, whom she could not but respect for his ingenuity, as well as for a kindliness and sympathy which lay at the bottom of all his abstract theories, she left him to his work, at which he would continue till drowsiness made, as he said, the idea dim and the nerve thick.

Retracing her steps down the long dark stair, not a very efficient medium for the removal of impressions so unlike the results of our natural consciousness, Rachel Grierson found herself again among the bustling crowds of the High Street. Nor could she view these busy people in the light by which she saw them before entering the little dark room of the philosopher. Though she did not know the classical word, she looked upon them as so many *automata;* and the long chain of causes came into her mind so vividly, that she found herself repeating the very words of Paul. Then there was the reference to her own individual fate; and was it not through the self-medium she saw all these people in so strange a light?—with Hope's lamp dashed down at her feet, and extinguished at the very moment when, by the communication of her father, she thought she had the means of recruiting it with a store of oil never to be exhausted till possession was accomplished. Still under these impressions, she came to the door of Mr. Ainslie's house. There were sounds of mirth and music coming from within; and so plastic is the mind when under a deep and engrossing feeling, that she found no difficulty in concentrating and modifying these sounds into joyful articulations from the very mouths of Walter Grierson and Agnes Ainslie themselves. Such are the moral echoes which respond to, because they are formed by the suspicions of, disappointed love. No longer for the moment were Paul's thoughts true.

These happy beings inside were happy because they had the hearts and the wills to enjoy; but she could draw no conclusion that she herself could dispose her mind for the acceptance of the world's pleasures also when her gloom should be away among the shadows, and nature's innumerable enjoyments placed within her power. Yet, withal, she could execute her commission, and upon the door being opened, she could enter in the very face of that mirth of which she fancied herself the victim.

On being shown into a parlour, she was presently waited upon by Mr. Ainslie, who seemed to her to have come from the scene of enjoyment in the drawing-room. She could even fancy that he eyed her as in some way standing in the path of his daughter's expectations through Walter—a fancy which of course would gain strength from the somewhat excited manner in which he received the words of her commission, to the effect that he would repair the next forenoon to the house of the merchant-burgess, for the purpose of preparing his last will and testament. The notary agreed to attend, and thus, still construing appearances according to the assimilating bent of her mind, she departed for home. After going through the routine of her domestic duties, and caring for her invalid father, she retired to bed—that place of so-called rest, where mortals chew the cud of the thoughts of the day or of years. And how unlike the two processes, the physical and the mental!—in the one is brought up for a second enjoyment the green grass of nature, still fresh and palatable and nutritious; in the other, the seared leaves of memory, feeding unavailing regrets, and filling the microcosm with phantoms and dire shapes of evil, the types whereof never had an existence in the outer world. Walter Grierson was lost to her for ever, and the dire energies of fate, as described

by the artist-philosopher, seemed to hang over her, claiming, in harsh tones, her will as a mere instrument in the working out of her own destiny.

Next day Mr. Ainslie called, and was for a long time closeted with Mr. Grierson; but so careless was she now of the fortune about being left to her, and which she was satisfied would not now be a means of showing her affection for Walter, that she felt little interest in an affair which otherwise might have appeared of so much importance to her. Her attention was, notwithstanding, claimed by an incident. After the interview, the notary visited Walter Grierson in his room, where the young man seemed to have been waiting for him. In ordinary circumstances it might have appeared strange that a man of business, bound to secrecy, would divulge the terms of a will to any one, but far more that he should take means for apprising a nephew that he was deprived of any share of his uncle's means. Nor could she account for this interview on any other supposition than that Mr. Ainslie knew of the intentions of Walter towards his daughter, and that he took this early opportunity of intimating that a disinherited young man, of the grade of a merchant's clerk, would not, as a son-in-law, suit the expectations of an ambitious writer. Yet out of this interview there came to, if not drawn by, her fancy a glimmer of hope, inasmuch as, if the young man were rejected by the notary in consequence of the ban of disinheritance, he would be left to the attractions of her wealth; but this supposition involved the assumption that her triumph would be over a mind that was mercenary, and not over a heart predisposed to love; nay, her generosity revolted at the thought of gratifying her long-concealed passion at the expense of the sacrificed love of another. That other, too, had a better right to the object than she herself, in so far that Agnes

Ainslie's love had been returned, while hers had not. But these speculations were to be brought to the test by words and actions.

No sooner had Mr. Ainslie left than Rachel was visited in her private parlour by Walter Grierson himself. He had seldom taken that liberty before, for her secret passion had been ruled by a stern virtue. A natural shyness, remote from coyness, demanded the conciliation of respect, though ready at a moment to pass into the generosity of confidence where she was certain of a return; but his presence before her might have been accounted for by his appearance, which was that of one whose excitement was only attempted to be overborne by an effort—a result more mechanical than spiritual. His manner, not less than his countenance, composed to gravity, was belied by the tremulous light of his eye; and as he seized her hand and pressed it fervently, she could feel that his trembled more than her own. Her manner was also embarrassed, as it well might be, where so many conflicting feelings, some revived from old memories, and some produced by the singular events of the day and hour, agitated her frame.

"I am going to surprise you, cousin," he said, while he fixed his eye upon her, as if to watch the effect of his words.

Rachel forgot for a moment the philosophy of Paul —why should one be surprised when the thing that is to be is a result of a change in something else as old as Aldebaran, let alone "the sun and the seven stars?" She was indeed prepared for a surprise.

"It is just the old story of the heart," he resumed. "Our intercourse began so early, and partook so much of that of mere relations, that I never could tell when the mere social feeling gave place to another which I need not mention. You know, Rachel, what I mean."

She was silent because she was distrustful, yet her heart beat bravely in spite of her efforts; for was not this man the object of her love, and is not love moved with an eloquence which makes reason ashamed of her poor figures and modes?

"Yes," he went on, "I take it for granted that you know I am only labouring towards a confession. Yes, dear heart, for years I have considered you as the one sole object in all this world of fair visions formed to make me happy. You see I cannot get out of the ordinary mode of speech. The lover is fated to adjure, to praise, and to petition always in the same set form of words; yet is not the confession enough?"

"So far," said she; "but I have never seen any evidence of all this;" as if she wanted more in the same strain—sweet to the ear, though distrusted by the reason.

"No more you have," he continued, "yet you know that love is often suspicious of itself. I have watched with my eye your movements and attitudes when you thought I was not observing you. My ear has followed your voice through adjoining rooms when you thought I was listening to other sounds. I have admired your words, without venturing the response of admiration. Often I have wished to fold you in my arms when you dreamt nothing of my inward thoughts. In short, Rachel, I have loved you for years! Yes, I have enjoyed, or suffered, this gloating, yea, delightful misery of the heart when it feeds upon its own secret treasures, and trembles at the test which might dissolve the dream."

"And why this suppression and secrecy, Walter?" she asked. "How could you know," she continued, as she held down her head, "that I would be adverse to your wishes; nay, that I was not even in the same condition as yourself?"

"Surely you do not mean to say that?" he cried,

with something like the rapture of one relieved by pleasure from pain. "I am not worthy even of the suspicion that you speak according to the bidding of your heart. Have I not watched your looks, and penetrated into your eyes, to ascertain whether I might venture to know my fate, and yet never could discover even the symptom of a return; and then was I not under a conviction that your affections were engaged elsewhere?"

"Where?" asked Rachel, with a look of surprise.

"We are apparently drifting into confessions," responded he. "I may say that I never could construe your visits to Paul, the ingenious artist, merely as dictated by admiration of his wonderful genius."

"You do not know that Paul is the son of my mother's sister," replied she. "Your uncle knows; but there may be reasons why you don't."

"Then I am relieved," was the lover's ejaculation, in a tone as if he had got quit of a great burden.

"Yes, that is the truth," continued she; "but I also confess that I have been attracted to his small dark workshop by the exquisite curiosities of art on which he is so often engaged, and which, by occupying so much of his time, keep him poor. It was only yesterday I saw on his bench a locket which seems to transcend all his prior efforts."

The young man smiled and nodded. What could he mean? Why was he not dumbfoundered?

"It is in the shape of a heart," she continued; "and upon touching a spring there fly up two tiny figures, which, with fluttering wings, seem to devour each other with kisses."

Words which forced themselves out of her in spite of her shyness, but which she could not follow up by more than a side-look at her admirer.

"And upon which," said he, still smiling, "there is engraven the inscription, 'From Walter Grierson to Agnes Ainslie.'"

"Yes," sighed Rachel, "the very words. I read them again and again, and could scarcely believe my eyes."

"And well you might not," said he; "but your simple heart has never yet informed you that love finds out strange inventions. I have been guilty of a *ruse d'amour*, for which I beg your pardon. Knowing that you were in the habit of visiting Paul's workroom, and seeing all the work of his cunning fingers, I got him to make the locket out of a piece of gold I got from my uncle, and the inscription was,"—and here he paused as if to watch her expression,—"yes, designed to quicken your affection for me by awakening jealousy. I confess it. Agnes Ainslie was and is nothing to me; and I used her name merely because I thought that you would view her as a likely rival."

"Can all this be true?" muttered Rachel to herself, as the wish to believe was pursued by the doubt which revolted against a departure from all natural and rational actions.

Perhaps she was not versed in the ways of the world; but whether so or not, the difference in effect would have been small; for what man, beloved by a woman, ever yet pled his cause before his mistress without other than a wise man for his client?

"And if it is your wish, my dear Rachel," he continued, "the inscription shall be erased, and replaced by the name of Rachel Grierson. What say you?"

His hand was held out for that acceptance which betokened consent. It was accepted; yes, and more. His arms were next moment around her waist; the heart of the yielding girl beat rarely, the wistful face

was turned up as even courting his eyes, the kiss was impressed;—why, more, Rachel Grierson was surely Walter Grierson's, and he was hers, and surely to be for ever in this world.

Rachel was now in that state of mind when the pleasantness of a contemplated object excludes any inquiry whether it is true or false, good or evil; and, in spite of Paul's fatalism, she was satisfied that it was with Walter's own free will that he had done what he had done, and said what he had said. The changed inscription on the locket, and the delivery of that pledge to her, would complete the vowing of the troth whereby she was to become his wife. Entirely ignorant of what had taken place between the nephew and the uncle, by means of which she might have been able to analyze his conduct, she had only the closeting of Mr. Ainslie and Walter to suggest to her that the young man's sudden declaration was the result of his knowledge that she was to be sole heiress. The heart that is under the influence of love, as we have hinted, is too credulous to the tongue of the lover to doubt the sincerity of his professions. So all appeared well. The motives in action were adequate to the will of the parties who used them; and as she felt that her love was in the power of herself, so she could not doubt that Walter's affection was the result of his approval of her good qualities. Paul was now no longer an oracle. She would be pleased to have an opportunity of showing him that his genius lay more in his fingers than in his head. She had now, however, something else to do. She went to her father's room. He was in one of those reveries to which, as we have said, all the thinking of the extremely aged is reduced, when the world and its figures of men and women, its strange oscillations and changes, its passions, pleasures, and pains, seem as

made remote by the intervention of a long space—dim, shadowy, and ghost-like. It is one of the stages through which the long-living must pass, and, like all the other experiences of life, it is true only to one's self—it cannot be communicated by words. "Old memories are spectres that do seem to chase the soul out of the world,"—an old quotation which may be admitted without embracing the metaphysical paradox, that "subjective thought is the poison of life," or conceding the sharp sneer of the cynic—

"Know, ye who for your pleasures gape,
Man's life at best is but a scrape."

But the entry of his daughter brought the old man back to the margin of real living existences. He held out his hand to her, and smiled in the face that was dear to him, as if for a moment he rejoiced in the experience of a feeling which connected him with breathing flesh and blood. The object of her visit was soon explained. Whispering in his ear, as if she were afraid of the sound of her own words, she told him that Walter had promised her a love-token, and that she wished to give him one in return, for which purpose she desired that she might be permitted to use one or two old "Spanish ounces" that lay in the old bureau.

"Yes, yes, dear child," said he. "Get a golden heart made of them. It will be an emblem of the true heart you have to give him, and a pledge to boot." Then, falling into one of his reveries, in which his mind seemed occupied by some strong feeling—"I am thus reminded," he continued, "of the old song you used to sing. There is a verse which I hope will never be applicable to you as it was to me. I wish to hear it for the last time," he added, with a languid smile, "in consideration of the ounces."

Rachel knew the verse, because she had formerly

noticed that it moved some chord in his memory connected with an old love affair in which his heart had been scathed; but she hesitated, for the meaning it conveyed was dowie and ominous.

"Come, come," said he, "the fate will never be yours."

She complied, yet it was with a trembling voice. The tune is at best but a sweet wail, and there was a misgiving of the heart which imparted the thrilling effect of a gipsy's farewell—

"If I had wist ere I had kisst,
That true love was so ill to win,
I'd have lock'd my heart in some secret part,
And bound it with a silver pin."

"Now you may take the ounces," said he with a sigh. "The verse has more meaning to me than you wot off, and surely, I hope, less to you."

And having thus gratified his whim—if that could be called a whim which was a desire to have repeated to him a sentiment once to him, as he hinted, a reality connected with the young heart when it was lusty, and his pulse strong and thick with the blood of young life—she went to the bureau, and, taking three of the ounces, she left the room. In the gloaming, she was again on her way to Paul's workshop, where she found the artist, as usual, with his head bent over the bright desk on the bench, engaged in some of his fanciful creations. Having seated herself in the chair where she had so often sat, she commenced her story of the circumstances of the day,—how Walter Grierson had acted and spoken to her; how he had accounted for the locket and inscription; how he intended to change the latter, and substitute her name for that of Agnes Ainslie; how he had sought her love, and succeeded in

his seeking; how she was satisfied that he was sincere in his professions; and how she had got the ounces from her father to make a love-token, to give in exchange for Walter's. All which Paul listened to with deep attention, now and then a faint smile passing over his delicate face, and followed by the old pensive expression which was peculiar to one so deeply imbued with the conviction that he was an organism in nature's plan, acted upon to fulfil a fate of which he could know nothing.

"And so the powers work," said he, as he looked in the hopeful face of his friend. "You are now happy, Rachel, because you believe what Walter has said to you, and you have no power over your belief. But," he continued, after a moment or two's silence, "I *may* have power over you, but not over myself. Walter Grierson has told you a falsehood, and his motive for it is adequate to his nature. Since he gave me the order for the locket, he has learnt that you are to inherit the whole fortune of your father, on the condition that you are to marry him; and his love for Agnes has been overborne by another feeling—the desire to possess your wealth. Neither the one nor the other of these feelings could he manufacture, or even modify, any more than he could charm the winds into silence, or send Jove's bolt back to its thunder-cloud; and now, look you, his game is this: if you succeed to the money, he will marry without loving you; if not, he will marry the woman he loves—Agnes Ainslie."

"You alarm me, Paul," said she, involuntarily holding forth her arms, as if she would have stopped his speech.

"And you cannot help your alarm," said he calmly; "neither can I help *not* being alarmed by your alarm."

"Oh, you trifle with my feelings," she cried, with a

kind of wail. "What have all these strange thoughts to do with this situation in which I am placed? Even though all things are pre-ordained, neither of us can be absolved from doing our duty to God and ourselves."

"Absolved!" echoed Paul. "Why, Rachel, look you, we are forced to do it, or not to do it, precisely as the motive culminates into action, but we are not sensible of the compulsion; and so am I under the necessity to tell you that Walter Grierson is playing false with you, according to the inexorable law of his nature. It is not an hour yet since Agnes Ainslie called here with some old trinkets, and requested me to make a ring out of them; nor was I left without the means of understanding that it was to be given in exchange for the locket."

"Is it possible?" cried she. "And can it be that I am deceived, and that secret powers are working my ruin?"

"Not necessarily your ruin," said he; "no mortal knows the birth of the next moment. The womb of fate is never empty; but no man shall dare to say what is in it till the issue of every moment proves itself. Nor does all this take away hope, for hope is in the ancient decree, like all the other evolutions of time, including that hope's being deferred till the heart grows sick; and," he added, as he looked sorrowfully into her face, "that is the fate of mine, for, know you, Rachel Grierson, I have long loved you, and have now seen that the riches you are to inherit put you beyond the sphere of my ambition. I have often wished—pardon me, Rachel—yes, I have often wished you might be left a beggar, that I might have the privilege of using the invention with which I am gifted to astonish the world by my handiwork, and bring wealth to her I loved."

"I am surrounded on all sides by difficulties," sighed

the young woman, as she seemed to find herself in the mazes of an unseen destiny. As she looked at her cousin, she thought that one of her evils was that the capture of her affections so early by Walter had prevented her from viewing Paul in any other light than that of an ingenious artist, and a man of kindly sympathies, however much he was separated from mankind by a theory of the world too esoteric for ordinary thought, and which yet, at some time of man's life, forces its way amidst palpitations of fear to every heart.

On reaching home she met there the notary, Mr. Ainslie, who informed her, probably at the request of her father (for information of that kind is seldom given gratuitously), that the will had been signed, and left in the possession of the old man. Even this communication, so calculated to shake from the heart so many of the sorrows of life, had no greater effect upon her generous nature than to increase the responsibility of fulfilling the condition upon which the inheritance was to be received and held. If she had not been under the effect of an early prepossession in favour of Walter, she might have doubted the sincerity of his statement, as it came from his own mouth. Suspicion attached to every word of it; but after the communication made by Paul, it was scarcely possible for her to resist the conclusion that he had told her a falsehood, and that he was aiming at the fortune, without the power or the inclination to give her in return his love; nay, that he was heartlessly sacrificing to his passion for gold two parties—the object of his real love, and that of his feigned. Yet she did not resist that conclusion; and so good an analyst was she of her own mind, that even when in the very act of throwing away these suspicions of his honesty, she knew in her soul that her love was in successful conflict with an array of evidence estab-

lishing the fact which she disregarded. Then the consciousness of this inability to cease loving the man whom she could hardly doubt to be a liar, as well as heartless and mercenary, brought up to her the strange theory of Paul. The motive which no man or woman could make or even modify, was the prime spring as well as ruler of the will, cropping out, to use his own words, from moral, if not also physical causes, laid when God said, "Let there be light, and there was light." A deeper thinker than most of her sex, she felt "the sublimity in terror" of this view of God's ways with man. If she could not resist the resolution to love Walter, how could he resist the love he bore to another? The thought shook her to the heart; nor was she less pained when she reflected on the hapless Paul, with his long-concealed affection, so pure from the sordidness of a desire for money, that he would have toiled for her under the flame of the midnight lamp, continued into the light of the rising sun.

During the night the persistency of her resolution to remain by her past affection was maintained; yet as it was still merely a persistency implying the continuance of a foe ready to assert the old rights, she was so far unhappy that she wanted that composure of mind which consists in the absence of conflict among one's own thoughts.

In the morning she found the locket lying on her parlour table, with the inscription changed from Agnes Ainslie to Rachel Grierson. She took it up and fixed her eyes upon it. At one time she would have given the world for it; now it attracted her and repelled her. It came from the only man she loved; but another name had been on it, which ought, for aught she could be sure of, to have been on it still. It might be the pledge of affection, but it might also be the evidence of

falsehood to her and unfaithfulness to another. And then, as she traced the lines of her name, she thought she could discover the signs of a tremulousness in the hand that traced them. Amidst all these thoughts and conflicting feelings, she could not help recurring to the circumstance that he had not presented the locket with his own hands. She was unwilling to indulge in an unfavourable construction; and perhaps the more so that it so far pleased her as relieving her from the dilemma of accepting it with more coldness than her love warranted, or more warmth than her reason allowed. Nay, though she gloated over his image when she was alone, she felt an undefined fear of meeting him. Might he not be precipitated into some further defence or confession, which might fortify suspicions still battling against her prepossessions, and diminish her love? Nor was this disinclination towards personal interviews confined to this day—it continued; and it seemed as if he also wished his connection with her to stand in the meantime upon the pledges and confessions already made. This she could also notice; but as for rendering a true reason for it, she couldn't, even with the great ability she possessed in construing conduct and character.

But meanwhile time was accumulating antagonistic forces which would explode in a consummation. Her thoughts were to be occupied by another, who claimed her affections and care by an appeal as powerful as it was without guile. Her father was seized with paralysis. He was laid speechless on the bed where she sat, a watchful and affectionate nurse, ready to sacrifice sleep and peace and rest to the wants of him who, all through her life, had been her friend and benefactor, and who had provided for her future days at the expense of hopes entertained by his legitimate heirs. For three

days he had lain without speaking a word, and Rachel could only guess his wants by mute signs. During all this time her thoughts had scarcely glanced at Walter. He seemed anxious about the condition of his uncle, calling repeatedly at the bedroom door, and going away without entering. But his manner indicated no affection, if it did not rather seem that he considered the old man had done his worst against him, and that sorrow was not due from one he had disinherited. Her affections were too much engrossed by her patient to permit her thinking of what was being transacted in the outside world. Yet, when she looked upon the face of the invalid, so pale and motionless, where so long the shades of grief and the lights of joy had chased each other, by the old decree of human destiny, the words of Paul would occur to her. Was the death that was there impending the result of a more necessary law than that which had ruled every other condition of body or mind which had ever been experienced by the patient sufferer? Then there came the question, Could Walter Grierson so regulate his heart as to force it to love her in preference to Agnes Ainslie? Could she, Rachel herself, so rule her feelings as to cease loving the man she still suspected of falsehood and treachery? It was even while she was thus ruminating over thoughts that made her tremble, that she observed, on the third night, a change in her patient. He seemed to start by the advent of some recollection. His body became restless, and he waved his hand wildly, as if he wanted her to bend over him, to hear what he might struggle to say. She immediately obeyed the sign. He fixed his eyes upon her, made efforts to articulate, which resulted only in a thick, broken gibberish. She could only catch one or two indistinct words, from which it seemed that he wished to tell her *where she would find the will;*

but the precise phrase whereby he wished to indicate the deposit was pronounced in such an imperfect manner that she could not make it out. Strangely enough, yet still consistently with the generosity of her character, she did not like to pain him by indicating that she did not understand him. Nay, she nodded pleasantly, as if she wanted him to be easy, under the satisfaction that he had succeeded in his efforts to articulate. Yet so far was she from thinking of the importance of the communication to herself, that she flattered him into the belief that, as he could now speak so as to be understood, he was in the way of improving. Alas for the goodness which is evil to the heart that produces it!

"There are of plants
That die of too much generosity—
Exhaling their sweet life in essences."

Paul would have said that this too was a cropping out of the old causal strata. In two hours more, David Grierson was dead, and Rachel was left to mourn for her parent and benefactor.

Now the issues were accumulating. A very short time only was allowed to elapse before Mr. Ainslie, accompanied by Walter, came to seal up the repositories; an operation which was gone through in a manner which indicated that both of them thought they were locking up and making secure that which would destroy their hopes. They seemed under the conviction that the will was in the bureau; and if they had been men otherwise than merely what, as the world goes, are called honest, they might have abstracted the document; for the generous Rachel never even looked at their proceedings, grieved as she was at the death of her father. They were, at least, above that.

In a few days David Grierson was consigned to the

earth, and, after the funeral, Mr. Ainslie, accompanied by Walter, again attended to open the repositories and read the testament. Rachel agreed to be present. When the seals were removed, she was asked by the notary if she knew where the document was deposited. She now felt the consequence of the easy manner in which she had let slip the opportunity so dearly offered by her father, of knowing the *locale* of a writ in all respects so important; for it cannot be doubted that, if she had persevered, she might have succeeded in drawing out of him the word, articulated so as that she might have comprehended it. She accordingly, yet without any anticipation of danger, answered in the negative, whereupon the notary and nephew, who seemed to be on the most friendly terms, set about a search. Rachel remained. A whole hour was passed in the search; the will was not yet found. Every drawer of the bureau was examined,—the presses, the cabinets, the table-drawers, the trunks. And so another hour passed—no will. Rachel began to get alarmed, and perhaps the more that she saw upon the faces of the searchers an expression which she could not comprehend. Their spirits seemed to have become elated as hers became depressed; yet why should that have been, if Walter Grierson was to be "true to his troth?"

"We need search no more," said Mr. Ainslie. "The will is not in the house. I should say it is not in existence, and that Mr. Grierson, having changed his mind, had destroyed it."

"Not so," replied Rachel, "for a few minutes before his death he tried to tell me where it was, but the name of the place died away upon his tongue, and I could not catch it."

"Neither can we catch the deed," said Walter, with a laugh which had a spice of irony in it.

And so the search was given up. The two searchers left the house, apparently in close conversation. Rachel sought her room and threw herself on a sofa, oppressed by doubts and fears which she could not very well explain. The manner of Walter appeared to her not to be that of one who was pledged to marry her. Her mind ran rapidly back over doubtful reminiscences which yielded no comfort to the heart; nay, she felt that he had never been as a lover to her; and far less that day when, as it appeared, he was to be master of his uncle's wealth. Yet again comes the thought, Was he pledged to her? Ay, that was certain enough; and then she was so little versed in the subtle ways of the world, that she could not doubt of his being "true to his troth."

As soon as she recovered from her meditation, she sought again the workroom of the artist, to whom she told the issue of the search for the will. Paul looked at first greatly struck, but under his strange philosophy he recovered that calmness which belongs to those of his way of thinking.

"Have I not often preached to you, Rachel," said he, as he lay back on his chair, "that all these things were fixed ere Sirius was born? Yea," he added, as a smile played amid the seriousness of his face, "ere yet there was a space for the dog-star to wag his tail. The croppings out will now come thick, and you will know whether you are to be a lady or a beggar."

Rachel might have known that the consolation offered by fatalists is only the recommendation of a resignation which, as fated itself, is gloomy, if not awful, for it amounts to an annihilation of self, with all hopes, energies, and resolutions. She heard his words, and forgave him, if she did not believe him; for she knew that he was true in his friendship, and benevolent in

his feelings—parts these, too, as he would have said, of the decree. She left him in a condition of sadness for which she could not yet account, and the hues of her mind seemed to be projected on all objects around her. She retired to rest; but she could not banish from her mind that the realities of her condition required to be read by the blue light of Paul's philosophy. It was far in the morning before she fell asleep; and when nine came she felt unrested. The servant came in to her and told her the hour. The breakfast was ready; but Walter, who had not returned on the prior night, was not as usual waiting for her. The announcement was ominously in harmony with the thoughts she had tried to banish. She scarcely touched the breakfast, and the day passed in expectation of Walter. Night came, but it did not bring him. The next day passed in the same way. People called to condole without knowing how much she stood in need of condolence; but still no Walter came to redeem the pledge of his love. Yet still she hoped; nor till an entire month had gone over her head did she renounce her confidence that he would be "true to his troth."

At the end of this period Paul advised her to take counsel. He told her that the law had remedies for losses of deeds; and she accordingly consulted a legal gentleman of the name of Cleghorn. The result was not favourable. It appeared that Mr. Ainslie denied that there was any copy or scroll of the will, through the means of which it might have been "set up," by what is called a proving of the tenor. There was no hope here, and by-and-by she saw advertised in the *Caledonian Mercury* that the furniture of the house was to be sold within a week. She was there on mere tolerance; and now she had got a clear intimation to flit. As for money or effects, she had none, except her

wardrobe, for she never thought of providing for an exigency which she was satisfied never would occur. Again she applied to Paul, who, with her consent, went and took for her a solitary room in the close we have already mentioned. It was her intention to acquire a livelihood by means of her needle, at that time almost the only resource for genteel poverty. Some articles of furniture were got, principally by Paul; and there, two days before the sale, she took up her residence. Nor did the kindness of Paul stop here. He attended the sale, and, considerately judging that some articles belonging to her father would be acceptable to her, he purchased, for a small sum, the old bureau of which we have already spoken. The article was removed to Rachel's room.

For a period of fifteen years did Rachel Grierson live in that room plying her needle to obtain for her a subsistence. Her story, which came to be known, procured her plenty of work; and the ten fingers, which were sufficiently employed, sufficed for the wants of the stomach,—small these wants, probably, in her who had heard of the marriage of Walter with Agnes Ainslie; yea, she who could bear to hear that intelligence might claim a right to be a pupil of Paul's school of philosophy. Paul she indeed loved as a friend, but she never could bring herself to the resolution of marrying the little artist. There was a train of evils: the "croppings out" of her fate, as Paul called it, were thick enough and to spare; for she fell into bad health, which was the precursor of a fit of palsy, depriving her for ever of the power of working for herself. Then it was that Paul's affection was shown more clearly than ever. Day by day he brought her all the food she required; but at length he himself was taken ill, and his absence was fatal. Pride prevented her from making

her necessity known to the neighbours, with whom she had but little intercourse. We have told how she was found dead; and when we say that Paul recovered to be present at her funeral, we have only one fact more to state. It is this: Paul took the old bureau home to his own little room, to keep as a memorial of the only woman he ever loved. One day, when repairing the internal drawers, he found in a hollow perpendicular slip, which looked like a broad beading, a document which was thus entitled on the back:

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

BY

DAVID GRIERSON,

IN FAVOUR OF

RACHEL GRIERSON.

1770.

LADY RAE.

DURING the time that Oliver Cromwell was in Edinburgh, a lady called one day at his lodgings and solicited an interview. She was closely wrapped up in a large and loose mantle, and deeply veiled. The former, however, did not conceal a shape of singular elegance, nor mar the light and graceful carriage of the wearer. Both were exceedingly striking; and if the veil performed its duty more effectually than the mantle, by completely hiding the countenance of the future Protector's fair visitor, it was only to incite the imagination to invest that countenance with the utmost beauty of which the "human face divine" is susceptible. Nor would such creation of the fancy have surpassed the truth, for the veiled one was indeed "fair to look upon."

On its being announced to Cromwell that a lady desired an interview with him, he, in some surprise, demanded who and what she was. The servant could not tell. She had declined to give her name, or to say what was the purpose of her visit.

The Protector thought for a moment, and as he did so, kept gazing, with a look of abstraction, in the face of his valet. At length—

"Admit her, Porson, admit her," he said. "The Lord sends his own messengers in his own way; and if we deny them, He will deny us."

Porson, who was one of Cromwell's most pious soldiers —for he served in the double capacity of warrior and

valet—stroked his sleek hair down over his solemn brow, and uttered a sonorous "amen" to the unconnected and unintelligible observation of his master, who, it is well known, dealt much in this extraordinary sort of jargon.

Having uttered his lugubrious amen, Porson withdrew, and in a few minutes returned, conducting the lady, of whom we have spoken, into the presence of Cromwell.

On entering the apartment, the former threw aside her veil, and discovered a countenance of such cunning charms as moved the future Protector to throw into his manner an air of unwonted gallantry.

At the lady's first entrance he was busy writing, and had merely thrown down his pen when she appeared, without intending to carry his courtesy any further; but he had no sooner caught a sight of the fair face of his visitor, than, excited by an involuntary impulse, he rose from his chair and advanced towards her, smiling and bowing most graciously; the latter, however, being by no means remarkable either for its ease or its elegance.

"Pray, madam," now said Cromwell, still looking the agreeable—so far as his saturnine features would admit of such expression—"to what happy circumstance am I indebted for the honour of this visit?"

"The circumstance, sir, that brings me here is by no means a happy one," replied the lady, in tones that thrilled even the iron nerves of Oliver Cromwell. "I am Lady Rae, General; the wife of John Lord Rae, at present a prisoner in the Tolbooth of Edinburgh for his adherence to the cause of the late king."

"Ah, my Lady Rae, I am sorry for you—sorry for you indeed; but doubtless you have found consolation in the same source whence your afflictions have sprung. Truly may I reckon—indeed may I, doubtless—that the

Lord, who has seen fit to chastise you, has also comforted you under this dispensation."

"None, Sir General, who seek the aid of the Almighty in a true spirit ever seek that aid in vain," replied Lady Rae; "and I have been a seeker, and have found; nor have I, I trust, been wanting on this occasion in a due submission to his will."

"Truly, I hope not; indeed do I," replied Cromwell. "Then, what would ye with me, fair lady? What would ye with one so feeble and humble as I am, who am but as a tool, a mean instrument in the hand of the artificer?" And the speaker assumed a look of the deepest humility.

"I dare not utter it! I dare not utter it, General!" exclaimed Lady Rae, now giving way, for the first time, to that emotion which was agitating her whole frame, although she had hitherto endeavoured, and not unsuccessfully, to conceal it. "I dare not utter it," she said, "lest it should bring death to my hopes; yet came I hither for no other purpose."

"Speak, lady, speak," said Cromwell. "What would'st thou with me?"

Lady Rae flung herself on her knees, and exclaimed, with upraised countenance and streaming eyes—

"Save my husband, General! Restore him to liberty and to me; and thus, on my knees, shall I daily offer up prayers to heaven for thy safety and prosperity. Oh refuse me not!—refuse me not, General, as thou thyself hopest for mercy from thy God in the hour of retribution!" And she wildly grasped the knees of the republican commander.

Without saying a word, Cromwell gently disengaged himself from the fair suppliant, and, turning his back upon her, stalked to the further end of the apartment, seemingly much agitated.

On gaining the extremity of the room, Cromwell stood for two or three minutes, still keeping his back to Lady Rae, with arms folded, and drooping his head, as if musing deeply. At the expiry of this period, he suddenly turned round, and advancing towards his fair visitor with quick and hurried step, said—

"My Lady Rae, may the Lord direct me in this matter and in all others. I have been communing with myself anent your petition; truly have I, but see not that I can serve thee; I cannot indeed. If we would all walk in the straight path, we had need to walk warily; for in this matter I cannot help thee, seeing my Lord Rae is a State prisoner, and I have no power over him; none, truly, none whatever. The law is strong, and may not be trifled with. But I will consider, fair lady, indeed will I; I will seek direction and counsel in the matter from on high. I will do so this night; I will have this night to think of the matter, and thou wilt call upon me at this hour to-morrow, and I will then see if the Lord will vouchsafe me any light as to how I may assist thee and thy poor husband; for on thy account I would do so if I could."

Confused, and all but wholly unintelligible, as was this address of Cromwell's, Lady Rae perceived that it contained a gleam of comfort, that a ray of hope-inspiring light, however feeble, played through its obscurity; and, satisfied with this, she urged her suit no further, but, with a thankful acceptance of the Parliamentary general's invitation to her to wait upon him on the following day, she withdrew.

On Lady Rae issuing from Cromwell's lodgings, she stood in the street, gazing around her for an instant, as if looking for some one whom she had expected to find waiting her, but who was not at the moment in sight. This was the case; but it was only for a moment that

she was so detained. She had glanced but two or three times around her, when she was joined by a personage of very striking appearance. This was a huge Highlander, considerably above six feet in stature, proportionably stout and well made, and apparently of enormous strength. He was dressed in the full costume of his country, and armed to the teeth. By his side depended a tremendous claymore; in his belt were stuck a dagger and a brace of pistols; and on his shoulder rested that formidable weapon called a Lochaber axe.

The countenance of this tremendous personage was in keeping with his other charms: it was manly, and decidedly handsome, but withal was marked with an expression of fierceness that was appalling to look upon; and was thus calculated, when associated with his gigantic figure, to inspire at once admiration and fear.

As this formidable personage approached Lady Rae, he touched his bonnet with an air of the most profound respect, and assumed a look and attitude of devoted attention to her commands.

"I have seen him, John," said Lady Rae, addressing her Goliath of an attendant, who was neither more nor less than a retainer of Lord Rae's, but one who stood high in the estimation of both the former and the latter for his fidelity, and, fierce as he looked, for the gentleness of his nature. John M'Kay—for such was his name—was, in short, an especial favourite of both Lord and Lady Rae, and was admitted to a degree of confidence and familiarity that elevated him much above his real condition. They were proud, too, of his superb figure, and delighted to exhibit him in the full dress of his country, as a specimen of the men which it produced. "I have seen him, John," said Lady Rae, whose

protector and attendant John always was when she went forth on occasions of business of importance like the present.

"And what he'll say, my letty?" inquired John in a low and gentle tone, and stopping to catch Lady Rae's communication.

"Not much that is quite satisfactory, John. He speaks in a strange style, but I think there is ground of hope. He did not altogether refuse the prayer of my petition, but bade me call upon him again to-morrow."

John looked grave, but made no reply. His lady walked on, and he followed at a respectful distance.

The former now directed her steps to a locality in the city with which she was but too familiar, and which she had had occasion of late but too often to frequent. This was the Tolbooth—the place of her husband's confinement.

On reaching the outer entrance to the jail, the low half-door, thickly studded with huge-headed nails, by which it was temporarily secured during the day, was immediately thrown open for her admission by the turnkey—a little crusty-looking personage in a fur cap—who had been leaning over it, listlessly looking around him, on her ladyship's approach. As the latter entered the prison door, the former stood to one side, doffed his little fur cap, and respectfully wished her ladyship a good morning.

"How are you to-day, James?" said Lady Rae in kindly tones; "and how is my lord?"

"Quite well, my lady, quite well," replied the little turnkey, extremely proud, seemingly, of the condescension of her ladyship. The latter passed on, and commenced threading her way through the tortuous but well-known passages which led to her husband's

prison-room. John M'Kay followed his mistress into the jail, previously leaving his arms at the door—a condition to which he had always to submit before gaining admission. Having denuded himself of his weapons, John also passed on, but not before he had shaken his fist ominously in the face of the little jailer. This was John's constant practice every time he entered the prison; and, simple as the act was, it had a good deal of meaning. It meant, in the first place, that John associated the misfortune of his master's confinement with the little turnkey's employment; that he considered him as aiding and abetting in the same. It further meant, that if it were not for one thing more than another, or, as John himself would have expressed it, "for todder things more nor ones," he would have brought his Lochaber axe and the turnkey's head into more intimate contact.

In the meantime, Lady Rae having ascended several flights of dark and narrow stairs, and traversed several passages of a similar description, had arrived at a particular door, on either side of which stood a grenadier, with shouldered musket and bayonet fixed. They were the guards placed upon her husband, who occupied the apartment which they sentinelled.

The soldiers, who had orders to admit her ladyship and attendant to the prisoner at any time between the hours of nine in the morning and seven at night, offered no hindrance to her approaching the door and rapping for admittance. This she now did; and the "Who's there?" of the captive was replied to in a powerfully Celtic accent by John M'Kay, with—"My Letty Rae, my lort." The door instantly flew open, and its inmate came forth, with a smiling and delighted countenance, to receive his beautiful and faithful wife.

In the meantime, John M'Kay took his station on the

outside of the door—a more friendly guard over the inmates of the apartment to which it conducted than those who stood on either side of him. Here the same feeling which had dictated John's significant hint to the turnkey below, suggested his general bearing and particular manner to the two soldiers now beside him.

Maintaining a profound and contemptuous silence, he strutted up and down the passage—without going, however, more than two or three yards either way—in front of the door of his lordship's apartment, keeping his huge form proudly erect, as he thus paced the short walk to which he had limited himself, and casting, every now and then, a look of fierce defiance on the appalled soldiers, who looked with fear and dread on the chafed lion with whom they found themselves thus unpleasantly caged, and who seemed every moment as if he would spring upon and tear them to pieces; and, in truth, little provocation would it have taken to have brought John M'Kay's huge fists into play about their heads. There can be no doubt that there was nothing at that moment which would have given John more satisfaction than their affording him an excuse for attacking them. This, however, the soldiers carefully avoided; and, not content with refraining from giving the slightest offence, either in word, look, or deed, endeavoured to conciliate John by an attempt to lead him into friendly conversation. But the attempt was in vain. Their advances were all repelled, either with silent contempt or with a gruff uncourteous response. A specimen of the conversation which did take place between M'Kay and the guards may be given:—

"Delightful day, friend!" said one of the soldiers.

"S'pose it is!" replied John sternly, and continuing his walk.

A pause.

"Anything new in the town to-day?" at length said the other soldier.

"S'pose something new every tay!" replied John gruffly.

"Ay, ay, I dare say; but have *you* anything new to tell us?"

"Maype I have," said John, with a grim smile.

"What is it?"

"Tat I'll knock your tam thick head against tat wall if you'll pe botter me wi' any more o' your tam nonsense. Tat's news for you!" and John gave one of those peculiar Celtic grunts which no combination of letters can express. "And you, you scarecrow-looking rascal," he continued, addressing the other sentinel, "if you'll spoke anoder word, I'll cram my sporran doon your dam troat."

Having delivered himself of these friendly addresses, John resumed his march, with additional pride of step and bearing. In a minute after, he was summoned into Lord Rae's apartment, where he remained until Lady Rae left the prison, which she did in a short time afterwards.

It was with a beating heart and anxious mind that Lady Rae wended her way, on the following day—attended, as usual, by her gigantic serving-man—to the lodgings of Oliver Cromwell. On reaching the house, M'Kay took his station, as on a former occasion, on the outside, while her ladyship advanced towards the door, within which she speedily disappeared, her admittance having been more prompt on the present visit than the former.

In an instant after, Lady Rae was again in the presence of Oliver Cromwell. As on the former occasion, he was employed in writing when she entered, and as

on that occasion, so also he threw down his pen, and rose to receive her.

"Anent this matter of yours, my lady," began Cromwell abruptly, and without any previous salutation, although he looked all civility and kindness, "I really hardly know what to say; truly do I not; but the Lord directs all, and He will guide us in this thing also."

"I trust so!" interrupted Lady Rae, meekly.

"Yes," resumed the future Protector of England; "for we are but weak creatures, short-sighted and erring. But indeed, as I told you before, my lady, your husband is a State prisoner; truly is he, and therefore may I not interfere with him. I cannot; I have not the power. Yet would I serve thee if I could; truly would I with great pleasure. But these, you see, are strange times, in which all men must walk warily; for we are beset with enemies, with traitors—deceivers on all sides, men who fear not the Lord. Yet, for this matter of yours, my Lady Rae, I will tell you: I cannot take your husband from prison; it would be unseemly in the sight of all God-fearing men; but truly, if you could in any ways manage to get his lordship once without the prison walls, I would take upon me to prevent his being further troubled. He should have a protection under my hand; truly he should, although it might bring me to some odium with my friends. But he should have it, nevertheless, out of my respect for you, my lady. Now go, go, my lady; I may say no more on the subject. Go, try and fall on some means of getting thy husband without the walls of his prison; this done, come instantly to me, and thou shalt have a protection for him under my hand; indeed thou shalt."

To Lady Rae, this proposal was a grievous dis-

appointment. It contained an arrangement which she had never contemplated, and which seemed as impracticable as it was strange; yet she saw it was all she had to expect, and that whatever might be the result, she must be content with the extent of interference on her husband's behalf, which was included in the singular measures suggested by Cromwell.

Impressed with this conviction, Lady Rae thanked him for his kindness, said she would endeavour to get her husband without the prison gates by some means or other, and would then again wait upon him for the protection he was so generous as to offer.

"Do so, my lady, do so," said Cromwell, escorting her ladyship to the door with an air of great gallantry; "and may the Lord have thee in his holy keeping."

Lady Rae turned round, again thanked the general, curtseyed, and withdrew.

On reaching the street, her ladyship was instantly joined by her faithful attendant M'Kay, who had been waiting with the greatest anxiety and impatience for her return; for to him his master's life and liberty were dearer far than his own, and he well knew that both were much in the power of the extraordinary man on whom his lady was now waiting.

On the first glance which he obtained of his mistress's countenance, John saw, with a feeling of disappointment that lengthened his own several inches, that the interview had not been a satisfactory one. His native sense of politeness, however, and of the deference due to his mistress, prevented him making any inquiries as to what had passed until she should herself choose to communicate with him on the subject. For such communication, however, he had longer to wait than usual; for, lost in thought and depressed with disappointment, Lady Rae walked on a good way with-

out taking any notice whatever of her attendant, who was following at a distance of several yards. At length she suddenly stopped, but without turning round. This John knew to be the signal for him to advance. He accordingly did so, and, touching his bonnet, waited for the communication which it promised.

"I am afraid, John," now said Lady Rae—"I am afraid we shall be disappointed, after all. The general has made the strangest proposal you ever heard. He says that he cannot, without compromising himself, or to that effect, liberate his lordship from jail; but that if he were once out—that is, if he could be got out by any means—he would save him from being further troubled, and would grant him a protection under his own hand. But how on earth are we to get him out? It is impossible. These two guards at the door, besides other difficulties, render it altogether impracticable. I know not what is to be done."

It was some seconds before M'Kay made any reply. At length—

"I'll no think ta difficulty fery crate, after all, my letty," replied John. "There's shust ta bodachan at ta dore, I could put in my sporran, and ta twa soger."

"Yes, John; the first you might perhaps manage," said Lady Rae, smiling, and glancing unconsciously at the huge figure of her attendant, which presented so striking a contrast to that of the little, slim, crusty turnkey; "but the two soldiers—"

"Whoich," exclaimed John contemptuously; "if's no far prettier men than was there yesterday, it'll no trouble me much to manage them too, my letty. A wee bit clamsheuchar wi' my Lochaper axe, or a brog wi' my skean-dhu, will make them quate aneuch, my letty. Tat's but a small shob."

"John, John, no violence, no violence!" exclaimed

Lady Rae, in great alarm at the sanguinary view of the process for her husband's liberation which John had taken. "No violence. If his lordship's liberation be attempted at all, there must be no violence; at least none to the shedding of blood, or to the inflicting the smallest injury on any one. The idea is horrible; and, if acted on, would only make matters worse. Your own life, John, would be the forfeit of such an atrocious proceeding."

"Foich, a figs for tat, my letty, beggin' your letty-ship's pardon," replied John, a good deal disappointed at the peaceful tone of his mistress, and at the loss of an opportunity, such as he had long desired, of taking vengeance on his master's guards and jailers. "Foich, a figs for tat, my letty, beggin' your letty-ship's pardon," he said. "I could teuk to the hills in a moment's notice, and see who'll catch John M'Kay then."

"Well, well, perhaps, John, you might, but you must speak no more of violence; I charge you, speak no more of it. We will, in the meantime, go to his lordship and submit the matter to him, and be guided thereafter by his advice."

Having said this, Lady Rae directed her steps to the jail, and, closely followed by M'Kay, was soon after in the apartment of the prisoner.

Lord Rae having been apprised by his lady of the result of her interview with Cromwell, a secret consultation between the two, which lasted nearly an hour, ensued.

During this consultation, many different plans for effecting the liberation of the prisoner were suggested, and, after being duly weighed, abandoned as impracticable. One at length, however, was adopted, and this one was proposed by M'Kay; it was characteristic of

the man, and came as close in its nature to his original one as he durst presume upon.

This plan, which was a simple enough one, was to seize the two guards at the outside of the door, and to hold them fast until Lord Rae should have rushed past them and got out of the prison. The turnkey at the outer door, who, as has been already said, was a little slender man, his lordship was to seize and throw down, and then get over the little half-door, which was under his guardianship, the best way he could. A row of short, sharp pikes, however, with which it was fenced on its upper edge, rendered this a formidable difficulty; but it was thought that it might, to speak literally, be got over by the aid of a long form which stood on one side of the passage of the jail, for the accommodation of visitors.

All this trouble a touch of the key would have saved; but this the little man always carried in his pocket, never allowing it to remain in the lock an instant, however frequent or numerous his visitors might be.

The securing of the two guards at the prisoner's door, by far the most serious part of the business, M'Kay took upon himself, and with a degree of confidence that sufficiently showed how well he was aware of his own surpassing strength.

This plan of proceedings arranged, it was resolved that it should be put in execution that very afternoon. On that afternoon, accordingly, John M'Kay again appeared at the jail door, demanding admittance to his master. The door was immediately thrown open to him by the little turnkey, whom he now for the first time addressed in a friendly tone.

The same change of manner marked his salutation to the guards at the door of his master's apartment. To these he spoke in the most civil and obliging terms

possible. The men, who had often winced under his savage growls and fierce looks, wondered at the change, but were glad enough to meet with it in place of his former ferocity.

John, after talking for a few minutes with the sentinels, went into his lordship's room. The latter was dressed, and ready for the bold proceeding about to be adopted.

"Think you you can manage them, John?" said his lordship in a whisper, after the door had been secured in the inside.

"Pooch, a dizzen o' them, my lort!" replied M'Kay in the same under-tone. "It's twa bits o' shachlin' podies no wors speakin' aboot."

"But they are armed, John—they have guns and bayonets; and the former are loaded."

"Pooch, their guns! what'll sicknify their guns, my lort, when I'll have cot a hold o' the craturs themsels in my hants?" and he held out his enormous brown paws as if to certify their power. "I'll crush the podies like a mussel shells."

"No violence, John, remember," said Lord Rae energetically, but smiling as he spoke,—"that is, to the extent of doing the men any, the smallest personal injury. Remember now, John; do otherwise," continued his lordship in a more severe tone, "and you forfeit my favour and esteem for ever. Mark, John, besides," added his lordship, who seemed most anxious on the point which he was now pressing on M'Kay's consideration, "your doing any injury to these men would be destruction to me; for, under such circumstances, the general would not grant me a protection after I was out, and my case would otherwise be rendered infinitely worse and more hopeless than it is. Now, remember all this, John, and do the men no personal injury, I charge you."

John's face reddened a little at the earnestness with which these injunctions were delivered, and probably he thought they indicated something like degeneracy in his chief; but he promised compliance with his commands; and, to render his obedience more certain, by lessening the temptation to infringe them, he denuded himself of a concealed dirk, which he always carried about him, over and above the arms he openly wore. Of this proceeding, which was voluntary on M'Kay's part, his master highly approved, but, smiling, said—

"You have still your fists, John, nearly as dangerous weapons as that you have just laid aside; but I hope you will use them sparingly."

John smiled, and promised he would.

In a few minutes afterwards M'Kay came forth from Lord Rae's apartment to perform the daring feat of securing two armed men by the mere force of physical strength; for he was now without weapon of any kind. When he came out, however, it was with an appearance of the most friendly feeling towards the soldiers. He came out smiling graciously, and entered into familiar chat with the men, alleging that he came to put off the time till his master had written a letter which he was to deliver to a person in town.

Thrown off their guard by M'Kay's jocular and cordial manner, the soldiers grounded their muskets, and began to enter in earnest into the conversation which he was promoting. M'Kay, in the meantime, was watching his opportunity to seize them; but this, as it was necessary he should be placed, with regard to them, so as to have one on either side of him, that he might grasp both at the same instant, he did not obtain for some time.

By dint, however, of some exceedingly cautious and wary manœuvring, M'Kay at length found himself in a

position favourable to his meditated proceedings. On doing so, he, with the speed and force of lightning, darted an arm out on either side of him, seized a soldier by the breast with each hand, and with as much ease as a powerful dog could turn over a kitten, laid them both gently on their backs on the floor of the passage, where he held them extended at full length, and immovable in his tremendous grasp, till he felt assured that Lord Rae had cleared the prison. This the latter effected with the most perfect success. The moment M'Kay seized the soldiers—an act of which Lord Rae was apprised by the former's calling out, "Noo, noo, my lort"—he rushed out, ran along the passage, descended the stair in three or four leaps, came upon the little turnkey unawares, as he was looking over the half-door of the prison entrance—his sole occupation during three-fourths of the day—seized him by the neck of the coat behind, laid him down, as M'Kay had done by the soldiers, at his full length—no great length after all—on the floor; drew the form to the door, placed it over the little turnkey in such a way as to prevent his rising, jumped on it, leapt into the street at one bound, and instantly disappeared. All this was done in the tenth part of the time that has been taken to relate it. It was, in truth, the work of but a moment.

On being satisfied that Lord Rae had made his escape—

"Noo, lads, ye may got up," said M'Kay, loosening his hold of the men, and starting himself to his feet. "Ta burd's flown; but ye may look after ta cage, and see tat no more o' your canaries got away."

Freed from the powerful grasp which had hitherto pinned them to the floor, the soldiers sprang to their feet, and endeavoured to get hold of their muskets.

Seeing this, M'Kay again seized them, and again threw them to the floor; but on this occasion it was merely to show the power he had over them, if they should still have any doubt of it.

"Noo, lads, I'll tell you what it is," said M'Kay, addressing the prostrate soldiers—"if you'll behave yoursels desenly, and no be botherin' me wi' ony more o' your tam nonsense, I'll aloo you to make me your prisoner; for I'm no intending to run away; I'll kive myself up to save your hides, and take my shance of ta law for what I'll do. Tat's my mind of it, lads. If you like to acree to it, goot and well; if not, I will knock your two heads togidder, till your prains go into smash."

But too happy to accept of such terms, the soldiers at once assented to them; and on their doing so, were permitted once more to resume their legs, when M'Kay peaceably yielded himself their prisoner. The gigantic Highlander could easily have effected his own escape; but he could not have done so without having recourse to that violence which had been so anxiously deprecated by both his master and mistress. Without inflicting some mortal injury on the soldiers, he could not have prevented them from pursuing him when he had fled, and probably firing on him as he did so. All this, therefore, had been provided for by the arrangements previously agreed upon by Lord Rae and his retainer. By these it was settled, that he should, on the former's making his escape, peaceably yield himself up to "underlie the law," in a reliance on the friendly disposition of Cromwell towards the fugitive, which, it was not doubted, would be exerted in behalf of his servant. Such proceeding, it was thought too, would bring Lord Rae's case sooner to issue; and be, with regard to the law, as it were, throwing a bone in the

dog's way to arrest his attention, and interrupt his pursuit of the original and more important object of his vengeance.

On delivering himself up, M'Kay was immediately placed in confinement, and shortly after brought to trial, for aiding and abetting in the escape of a State prisoner. The trial was a very brief one; for the facts were easily established, and sentence was about to be passed on the prisoner, when a stir suddenly arose at the court door. The presiding judge paused; the stir increased. In the next instant it was hushed; and in that instant Cromwell entered the court. On advancing a pace or two within the apartment, he took off his hat, bowed respectfully to the judges, and proceeding onwards, finally ascended the bench and took his seat beside them.

When a man feels himself master, he need be under no great ceremony; neither need he trouble himself much about forms or rules which regulate the conduct of inferiors. Cromwell, on this occasion, got up in a few minutes after he had taken his place, and delivered to the court a long, and, after his usual fashion, obscure and unconnected oration in favour of the prisoner at the bar. The chief ground, however, on which he rested his defence and exculpation of M'Kay, was the fidelity to his master, which the crime with which he was charge implied, and the worse effect to the cause of morality than good to the political interests of the State, which the infliction of any punishment in such case would produce. "If," concluded Cromwell, "fidelity to a master is to be punished as a crime, where shall we look for honest servants?"

The reasoning of Cromwell, even had it been less cogent than it was, could not be but convincing to those who knew of and dreaded his power. He was

listened to with the most profound attention, and the justness of his arguments and force of his eloquence acknowledged by the acquittal of the prisoner.

As M'Kay rose from his seat at the bar to leave the court, Cromwell eyed him attentively for some seconds, and, struck with his prodigious size and fierce aspect, whispered to one of the judges near him, "May the Lord keep me from the devil's and *that* man's grasp."

We have now only to add, that the protection promised by Cromwell to Lady Rae for her husband was duly made out, and delivered to her. We need not say that it was found to be a perfectly efficient document.

THE DIAMOND EYES.

When I entered Edinburgh College the students were tolerably free from any of those clubs or parties into which some factitious subject—often a whim—divides them. In the prior year the spirit of wager had seized a great number of them with the harpy talons of the demon of gambling, giving rise to consequences prejudicial to their morals, as well as to their studies. A great deal of money among the richer of them changed hands upon the result of bets, often the most frivolous, if not altogether ridiculous. Now, we are not to say that, abstracted from the love of money, the act of betting is unqualifiedly bad, if rather we may not be able to say something for it, insomuch as it sometimes brings out, and stamps ingenuity or sagacity, while it represses and chastises arrogance. But the practice at the College at that time was actually wild. They sought out subjects; the aye and the no of ordinary converse was followed by the gauntlet, which was taken up on the instant; and they even had an umpire in the club, a respectable young man of the name of Hawley, who was too wise to bet himself, but who was pleased with the honour of being privileged to decide the bets of the others.

In the heat of this wild enthusiasm, it happened that two of these youths, one called Henry Dewhurst, and the other Frank Hamilton, were walking on the jetty which runs out from the harbour of Leith a full mile into the Forth. Dewhurst was the son of a West

India planter, who allowed him £300 a year, every penny of which was spent in paying only a part of his bills long before the year was done; one of which bills I had an opportunity of seeing, to my wonder—how any one could eat £15 worth of tarts and sweetmeats in the course of not many months! Hamilton was the son of a west country proprietor, and enjoyed the privilege of using, to his ruin, a yearly allowance of £250. In the midst of their sauntering they hailed two of their friends,—one Campbell, a sworn companion of the young West Indian; and the other Cameron, as closely allied to Hamilton;—all the four being, as the saying goes, "birds of a feather," tossing their wings in the gale of sprees, and not always sleeping in their own nests at night.

As they approached the end of the jetty, they met a lad who had wounded one of these large gulls called Tom Norries,—a beautiful creature, with its fine lead-coloured wings and charming snow-white breast, and eye like a diamond.

"I will give you a shilling for the bird," said Dewhurst.

"But what are you to do with it?" replied the lad. "I would not like it to be killed. It is only hurt in the wing; and I will get half-a-crown for it from one who has a garden to keep it in."

"No, no," said Dewhurst, "I'll not kill it. Here's your half-crown."

And the bargain was struck. Dewhurst, with the struggling bird in his hand, went down, followed by his friends, one of the side stairs to the stone rampart, by which the jetty is defended on the east. There they sat down. The sun was throwing a blaze of glory over a sea which repaid the gift with a liquid splendour scarcely inferior to his of fire; and the companions of

the bird, swirling in the clear air, seemed to be attracted by the sharp cries of the prisoner; but all its efforts were vain to gratify its love of liberty and their yearning. It was in the hands of those who had neither pity for its sufferings, consideration for the lessons it carried in its structure, nor taste for estimating its beauties. One of another kind of students might have detected adaptations in the structure of that creature sufficient to have raised his thoughts to the great Author of design and the source of all beauty,—that small and light body, capable of being suspended for a great length of time in the air by those broad wings, so that, as a bird of prey, it should watch for its food without the aid of a perch; the feathers, supplied by an unctuous substance, to enable them to throw off the water and keep the body dry; the web-feet for swimming; and the long legs, which it uses as a kind of stay, by turning them towards the head when it bends the neck, to apply the beak—that beak, too, so admirably formed—for taking up entire, or perforating the backs of the silly fishes that gambol too near the surface. Ay, even in these fishes, which, venturing too far from their natural depths, and becoming amorous of the sun, and playful in their escapades, he might see the symbol of man himself, who, when he leaves the paths of prudence, and gets top-light with pleasure, is ready, in every culmination of his delirium, to be caught by a waiting retribution. Ah! but our student, who held the bird, was not incurious—only cold and cruel in his curiosity.

"Hamilton," said he, "that bird could still swim on the surface of that sea, though deprived of every feather on its body."

"I deny it," replied Hamilton. "It will not swim five minutes."

"What do you bet?"—The old watchword.

"Five pounds."

"Done."

And getting Campbell to hold the beak, which the bird was using with all its vigour, he grasped its legs and wings together by his left hand, and began to tear from the tender living skin the feathers. Every handful showed the quivering flesh, and was followed by spouts of blood; nor did he seem to care—although the more carefully the flaying operation was performed, the better chance he had of carrying his wager—whether he brought away with the torn tips portions of the skin. The writhing of the tortured creature was rather an appeal to his deliberate cruelty, and the shrill scream only quickened the process. The back finished and bloody, the belly, snow-white and beautiful, was turned up, the feathers torn away, the breast laid bare, and one wing after the other stript of every pinion. Nothing in the shape of feathers, in short, was left, except the covering of the head, which resisted his fingers.

"There now is Plato's definition of a man personified," said he as he laughed.

During all this time a lady looked over the parapet. Dewhurst caught her eye red with anger, but he only laughed the louder.

"Now, Hamilton," said he, "you take the bird, and we mount to the platform. When I give the sign, fling him in, and we shall see how the bet goes."

They accordingly mounted, and the lady turning her back, as if she had been unable to bear longer the sight of so much cold cruelty, directed her vision towards the west; but a little boy, who was along with her, seemed to watch the operation.

"Now," cried Dewhurst.

And Hamilton threw the bird into the sea. The

creature, still vivacious, true to its old instinct, spread out its bare wings in an attempt to fly, but it was in vain; down it came sinking below the surface, but rising quickly again to lash, with the bleeding wings, the water on which it used to swim so lightly and elegantly. The struggle between the effort to fly and the tendency to sink was continued for several minutes, its screams bringing closer around it many of its compeers, who looked as if with pity and amazement on the suffering victim, known to them now only by the well-known cry of distress.

Meanwhile these curious students of natural history stood looking over the rail, watch in hand; and the little boy, an important personage in our story, also intent upon the experiment, cried out two solitary words, very simple ones too, and yet fraught with a strange import, as regards consequences, that could not be gathered from them.

"See, ma'."

But the lady to whom they were addressed had still her head turned away.

"Six minutes," cried Dewhurst. "The time is up, and the bird is only this instant down. I win."

"I admit it," responded Hamilton, evidently disconcerted. "I shall pay you to-night at Stewart's, at seven o'clock. I got my remittance yesterday."

"Content," said Dewhurst. "That's the third bet I have gained off you within a fortnight."

Hamilton bit his lip and scowled—an act which only roused against him the raillery of his comrades, who were now collected in a circle, and symptoms of anger of a more expressive kind showed themselves.

"You have been at this trade of flaying before," said he, looking sternly at Dewhurst. "Your father, like the other West Indians, is well acquainted with the

flaying of negroes, and you have been following his example with the Jamaica lungies. But, by G—d," he added, getting enraged, "next time we cross the rapiers of a bet, it shall be for ten times five."

"This instant," answered Dewhurst, on whom the imputations about his father acted as a fiery stimulant.

"Seek your subject," responded Hamilton.

"You see that lady there?" continued the West Indian. "She has a boy with her."

"I do."

"The mother of the boy, or not?" continued Dewhurst. "I say she is; and, in place of fifty, I'll make it a hundred."

"Have you ever seen them before?" asked Hamilton, trying to be calm.

"Never. I know no more of them than you do; and, besides, I give you your choice of mother, or not mother."

"Ha! ha!" laughed Campbell, as he looked intently at Dewhurst. "Are you mad, Dewhurst? Has your last triumph blinded you? The woman is too old by ten years."

Hamilton turned round without saying a word, and drew cautiously near the lady, whose eyes, as she stood looking at a foreign ship coming in, were still scornful, and it seemed as if she waited until some gentleman came up to inform him of the cruel act she had so recently witnessed. Resisting her fiery glances, he surveyed her calmly, looking by turns at her and the boy. A slight smile played on his lip in the midst of the indications of his wrath. One might have read in that expression—

"Not a feature in these two faces in the least similar, and the age is beyond all mortal doubt. I have the gull-flayer on the hip at last."

And returning to the companions with the same simulated coolness—

"Done for a hundred," he said. "That lady is not the mother of that boy."

"Agreed," answered Dewhurst, with a look of inward triumph. "How to be decided?"

"By the lips of the lady herself."

"Agreed."

"Yes," joined Campbell, "if you can get these lips to move. She looks angry, and now she is moving along probably for home, bequeathing to us the last look of her scorn. We shall give her time to cool down, and Cameron and I will then pay our respects to her. We shall get it out of the boy if she refuse to answer."

It was as Campbell said. The lady with the boy, who held her by the hand, had begun her return along the jetty. The companions kept walking behind; and of these, Campbell and Dewhurst fell back a little from the other two.

"Hark, Campbell," said Dewhurst. "Back me against Cameron for any sum you can get out of him. I'm sure of my quarry; and," laughing within the teeth, he added, "I'll gull him again."

"You're ruined, man," whispered his companion. "The woman is evidently too old, and I am satisfied you will catch some of her wrinkles."

A deeper whisper from Dewhurst conveyed to the ear of his friend—

"I heard the boy call her mother."

"The devil!" exclaimed Campbell in surprise; but, catching himself, "it might have been grandmother he meant."

"No, no. Children in Scotland use grandma', never ma', to grandmother. I'm satisfied; and if you are not a fool, take advantage of my"—

"Dishonesty," added Campbell.

"No; all fair with that fellow Hamilton. Besides, all bets assume a retention of reasons, otherwise there could be no bets. In addition, I did not assert that I did not hear them address each other."

"That's something," said Campbell. "I do not say it is impossible, or even very improbable, that she may be the mother; and if you will assure me, on your honour, of what you heard, I will have a little speculative peculation on Cameron."

"I can swear; and if I couldn't, do you think I would have bet so high, as in the event of losing I should be ruined?"

"I'm content," said Campbell. "Ho, there, Cameron! I will back Dewhurst on the maternity for ten."

"That will just pay Nightingale," replied Cameron. "I accept. Now for the grand *denouement*. Let us accost the arbitress of our fortunes."

"Not yet," said Hamilton. "Wait till she gets to the lighthouse, where there are people. It is clear she has not a good opinion of us, and in this solitary place she might get alarmed."

Hanging back to wait their opportunity, now upon the verge of a decision which might be attended with disastrous results to some of them, the whole four appeared absorbed in anxiety. Not a word was spoken; and it seemed possible that, during these trying minutes, a hint would have broken up the imprudent and dangerous compact. The terror of the club was before them, and the false honour which ruled them, in place of obedience to their fathers, and humanity to dumb creatures, retained the ascendency. So has it ever been with the worship of false gods: their exactions have always been in proportion to the folly and credulity of their votaries. The moment was approaching. The die was to carry formidable issues. Dark shadows

broke in through the resolution to be brave, as might have been observed in the features of both the principals. At length Campbell took the lead. They approached the lady, who at first seemed to shrink from them as monsters.

"We beg pardon," he said. "Be assured, madam, we have not the most distant intention to offend you. The truth is, that we have a bet among us as to whether you are the mother of this fine boy. We assure you, moreover, that it was the sport of betting that sought out the subject, and the nature of that subject cannot, we presume, be prejudicial either to your honour or your feelings. While I ask your pardon, allow me to add that the wager, foolish or not, is to be decided by your answer—yes or no."

"No."

After pronouncing, with a severe sternness, this monosyllable, she paused a little; and looking round upon the youths with a seriousness and dignity that sat upon her so well that they shrunk from her glance, she added, with a corresponding solemnity—

"Would to God, who sees all things—ay, and punishes all those who are cruel to the creatures He has formed with feelings suitable to their natures, and dear to them as ours are to us—that he who bet upon my being the mother of this boy may be he who tortured the unoffending bird!"

And, with these words, she departed, leaving the bewildered students looking at each other, with various emotions. It was, perhaps, fortunate for Dewhurst that the little sermon, contrary to the practice of the courts, came after, in place of preceding the condemnation, for he had been rendered all but insensible by the formidable monosyllable. He saw there was some mystery overhanging his present position. He doubted,

and he did not doubt the lady; but he heard the boy use the word, and he took up the impression that he was, by some mistake on his part, to be punished for the flaying of the bird. The lady's eye, red and angry, had been fixed upon him, and now, when she was gone, he still saw it. But there were more lurid lights, playing round certain stern facts connected with his fortunes. He must pay this £100 on the decision of her who had burned him with her scorn. There was no relief for him. The club at the College had no mercy, and he had enraged Hamilton, whose spirit was relentless. He had been under rebuke from his father, who had threatened to cut him off; and, worse still, the remnant of the last yearly remittance was £110 in the Royal Bank, while debts stood against him in the books of tailors, confectioners, tavern-keepers, shoemakers—some already in the form of decrees, and one at least in the advanced stage of a warrant. To sum up all, he was betrothed to Miss M——sh, the sister of a writer to the signet, who had already hinted doubts as the propriety of the marriage. He saw himself, in short, wrecked on the razor-backed shelving rocks of misery. In his extremity, he clutched at a floating weed: the woman, the lady, did not speak the truth. He had ears, and could hear, and he would trust to them. The boy could not be wrong.

"Campbell," he cried, "dog her home—she lies!" Hamilton and Campbell burst out into a laugh, but Campbell had been taken aback by the lady's answer: he had not £10 to pay Cameron, and the fear of the club was before him, with its stern decree of the brand of caste and rejection by his associates. Since the moment of the lady's answer, he had been conscious of obscure doubts as to her truthfulness, clustering round the suspicion that she might have known, by hearing

something, that Dewhurst, the gull-flayer, was on the side of the maternity, and that she wanted to punish him—a notion which seemed to be favoured by the somewhat affected manner of her expressing her little sermon. These doubts, fluid and wavering, became, as it were, crystallized by Dewhurst's cry that she was a liar; and, the moment he felt the sharp angles of the idea, he set off after the lady.

This hope, which was nothing more than despair in hysterics, enabled Dewhurst to withstand, for a little, the looks of triumph in Hamilton and Cameron, in spite of their laugh, which still rung in his ears. The sermon had touched him but little, and if he could have got quit of this wildly contracted debt, he would likely be the same man again. He did not, as yet, feel even the dishonour of having taken advantage of the boy's statement—an act which he had subtlety enough to defend. Give him only relief from this debt, the fire of the club, the stabbing glances of Hamilton's eye. At least he was not bound to suffer the personal expression of his companions' triumph any longer than he could away.

"We will wait the issue of Campbell's inquiry," he said with affected calmness. "I have a call to make in the Links."

And he was retreating, even as he uttered these words.

"I owe you £5," cried Hamilton, "which, *as a man of honour*, I pay you to-night at seven o'clock, upon the instant, at Stewart's. I have no wish to be dragged before the club."

With this barb, touched with wararra poison, or ten times distilled kakodyle, and a layer of honey over all, Dewhurst hurried away, to make no call. He was hard to subdue, and a puppy, whose passion it was to

strut, in the perfection of a refined toilette, among fashionable street-walkers. While he was abroad, his cares rankling within were overborne by the consciousness of being "in position." The dog's nose is cold even when his tongue is reeking; and as he walked slowly along, his exterior showed the proper thermometric nonchalance—it was not the time for a pyrometric measurement within the heart. On his way, he talked to a Leith merchant, who hailed him; yet he exhibited the required *retenu*, so expressive of confidence and ease within, and withal so fashionable. You might have said that he had the heart to wing a partridge,—to "wing it," a pretty phrase in the mouth of a polite sportsman, who, if a poacher were to break the bones of his leg, would, in his own case, think it a little different. Yes, Dewhurst might have been supposed to be able to "wing a partridge,"—not to "flay a gull."

It was while thus "in position"—not its master, but its slave—that curvation of the spine of society, which produces so much paralysis and death—that, when he came to Princes Street, he felt himself constrained and able to walk up South St. Andrew Street, direct to the door of the Royal Bank. He even entered; he even drew a draft; he even made that draft £110, all the money he had there in keeping for so many coming wants and exigencies; he even presented it to the teller, who knew his circumstances and his dangers—ay, and his father's anxieties while he sent the yearly remittance.

"All, Mr. Dewhurst?" said the teller, looking blank at the draft.

"All, sir; I require it all," answered the student, with such a mouthful of the vowel, that we might write the word *requoire*, and not be far from the pronunciation.

The teller gave his head a significant shake. If he had had a tail to shake, and had shaken that tail, it would have been much the same.

Having got the money, he was more than ever under the law of that proclivity, on the broad line to ruin, on which so many young men take stations; and still retaining his, he went at the hour of the hot joints, to dine at the Rainbow, where he met many others, in that refreshment house, of the same class, who, like himself, considered—that is, while the money was there—that guineas in the purse supersede the necessity of having ideas in the head. He took to such liquid accompaniments of the dinner, as would confirm the resolution he had formed, of paying at once his debt of honour. And why not? Was not he of that world whose code of laws draws the legitimate line of distinction between debts contracted to industrious tradesmen for the necessaries of life, and those which are the result of whim, pride, or vindictiveness? All recollections of the flaying of the bird, and of the lady's adjuration to heaven, had given way to the enthusiasm of the noble feeling to obey the dictates of that eternal and immutable code of honour. And by seven o'clock he was at Stewart's, where he found Hamilton and Cameron waiting for their respective "pounds of flesh."

"Here is the £5," cried Hamilton, as he entered; and, throwing the note upon the table, "it is for the gull trick."

"And here," responded the West Indian, "is your £100 for the woman trick."

And he cast from him the bundle of notes, with a grandeur of both honour and defiance. "But I have a reservation to make. Campbell has not reported to me the issue of his commission; and if it shall turn out that the woman retracts, I will reclaim the money."

"And get it too," said the other, laughing sneeringly, as he counted the notes. "But here comes Campbell."

"Campbell," cried Cameron, as his debtor entered, "I want my £10 to pay Nightingale."

"Ask Dewhurst," said Campbell. "I have been cheated by him. He told me a lie. The woman speaks true, and I shall be revenged."

"I have nothing to do with Dewhurst," answered Cameron. "You are my debtor; and if I don't get the money to-night—you know my lodgings—the club will decide upon it to-morrow."

And, throwing a withering look upon his old friend—a word now changed for, and lost in that expressive vocable, debtor—he hurried out, followed by Hamilton, who had both his money and his revenge, and wished to be beyond the reach of a recall.

Left to themselves, the two remaining friends of the hour before, but now no longer friends, looked sternly at each other. The one considered himself duped; the other was burning under the imputation of being a cheat and a liar.

"Oh I don't retract," said Campbell, with increased fierceness. "It was upon the faith of your word that I ventured the bet against my own convictions. I have traced the lady to Great King Street, where she resides, as the aunt of the boy; and I am satisfied that, in a case where the boy's mother is alive, and now in her own house, he, of the age he is, never could have used the word mother or mamma, or any word of that import, to his father's sister. All power and energies are comparative. This £10 cracks the spine of my fortune as effectually as ten times the amount. I have not the money, and know no more where to find it than I do to get hold of the philosopher's stone. I repeat I have been cheated, and I demand of you the money."

"Which you shall never get," replied Dewhurst. "I can swear that I heard the words. They thrill on my ears now; and the best proof of my conviction is, that I am myself ruined. Yes," and he began to roll his eyes about, as the terrors of his situation came rushing upon him, on the wake of the now departing effects of the Rainbow wine—"Yes, the swell, the fop, the leader of the college *ton*, whose coat came from the artistic study of Willis, whose necktie could raise a *furore*, whose glove, without a wrinkle, would condescend only to be touched by friendship on the tip of the finger, is now at the mercy of any one of twenty sleasy dogs, who can tell the sheriff I owe them money. Money! why, I have only fifteen pounds in the wide world, and I must pay that to my landlady."

As he uttered these last words, the door opened, and there stood before him a man with a blue coat, surmounted by a red collar. He held a paper in his hand; his demeanour was deferential and exuberantly polite.

"That sum you have mentioned, sir," he said, looking to the student, "with £10 added, will save you and me much trouble. The debt to Mr. Reid is £25; and here is a certain paper which gives me the power to do an unpolite thing. You comprehend? I am an advocate for painless operations."

"Will you accept the £15?" said Dewhurst, now scarcely able to articulate.

"Yes, if this gentleman here, who is, I presume, your friend, will kindly add the £10. The expenses may stand."

Campbell could only grin at this strange conversation.

"Unwilling?" continued the messenger. "Ah, I see. It is strange that when I devote myself to a gentleman, his friends fly away. This is my misfortune. Well, there is no help for it. We must take a walk to

the prison," addressing himself to his debtor. "You are a gentleman, and I shall be your servant in livery."

Dewhurst braced himself with a violent effort, like a spasm, and took his hat.

"Give me the £10," said Campbell. "It will make no difference now. There are no degrees in despair."

"I must take care of my master's money," said the officer, with an attempt at a smile; and without going the full length of imitating that most philanthropic of all executors of the law, Simpson, who patted his victims on the back while he adjusted the rope, he added, "And now, sir, I am at your humble service."

In a very short time after, the strange events of that day were terminated by the young man being placed in the debtor's prison of the Calton. Like other jail birds, he at first shunned his brethren in misfortune, fleeing to his room, and shrouding himself in solitude and partial darkness. The change from a life of gaiety, if not dissipation, to the experiences of prison squalor, had come upon him without preparation, if indeed preparation for evil ever diminishes or much ameliorates the inevitable effects of the visitation. Unfortunates exhibit wonderful diversities in their manifestations. Dewhurst became dejected, broken in spirits, sad, and remorseful. He scarcely stirred from the bed on which he had thrown himself when he entered; and his mind became a theatre where strange plays were acted, and strange personages performed strange parts, under the direction of stage managers over whom he had no control. Though some unhappy predecessor in the same cell had scribbled on the wall,

"A prison is a cannie place,
Though viewed with reprobation,
Where cheats and thieves, and scants o' grace,
Find time for cogitation,"

he did not find that he could properly cogitate or meditate, even if he had been, which he never was, a thinker. All his thoughts were reduced to a continued wild succession of burning images,—the mild face of his mother, so far away, as it smiled upon him when he ran about among the cane groves of the west; the negroes, with their "young massa" on their tongues, jabbering their affection; his father scowling upon him as undutiful; another, not so far away, in whose eyes —beautiful to him—love dwelt as his worshipper, looking all endearment, only the next moment to cast upon him the withering glance of her contempt, if not hatred; admirers, toadies, satellites, and sycophants, all there in groups and in succession, beslabbering him with praises, then exploding in peals of laughter. Nor was another awanting in these saturnalia—the form and face of her whose one word of sentence had been to him as a doom, and who fixed that doom in his soul by her red glance of reproof. Seemingly very indifferent objects assumed in the new lights of his spirit gigantic and affraying features,—the sea-gull, with its torn back, bleeding and quivering, and those diamond eyes so bright even in its looks of agony—an object low indeed in the scale of nature, but here elevated by some overruling power into the very heart of man's actions and destinies, as if to show out of what humble things the lightnings of retribution may come. Nay, these diamond eyes haunted him; they were everywhere in these saturnalian reveries, following every recurring image as an inevitable concomitant which he had no power to drive away, entering into the orbits of the personages, gleaming out of the heads of negroes, that of his father, that of his mother, even that of his mistress, imparting to the looks and glances of the latter a brilliancy which enhanced beauty, while it sharpened

them into poignancy. But most of all were they in some way associated with the form of the unknown lady. She never appeared to him as the being on whom his destiny was suspended; but, sooner or later, her own comparatively lustreless orbs changed into those diamonds, which could fulminate scorn not less than they could beam out supplication.

For several days and nights he had scarcely any intervals of peace from these soul-penetrating fancies, and these moments were due to visits. But who came to visit? Not the writer to the signet, the brother of his affianced, whom he had expected to see first of all as a friend, if not as a relation, ready to extend the hand that would save him; not any of those with whom he had shared the folly of extravagance, if not dissipation, on whom he had lavished favours in the wildness of his generosity. The first was felicitating himself on his sister's escape; the latter received the lesson that teaches prudence *a la distance.* His only visitors were one or two heads of families where he had been received as a fashionable friend, and these came only to look and inquire. Their curiosity was satisfied when they got out of him the amount of his debt, and pleased when they considered that their daughters were at home, and under no chance of becoming allied to a prisoner. One or two old associates, too, paid their respects to him, but they were of those who had resisted his fascinations and found their pleasures in their studies. We seek for the virtues, but we do not always find them in the high places, where masks, copied from them and bearing their beautiful lineaments and their effulgence, are worn in their stead only to cover the vices which are their very antipodes. No: more often in lowlier regions, lying *perdu* behind vices, not voluntary, but often, as it were, inflicted and peering out, ashamed to

be seen, because arrayed in the rags of poverty. A solitary female stole in to him. Who was she? One with whom he had formed a connection of not an honourable kind, only now interrupted by the walls of the prison? No. One whom he had long before cast off, only because the vice he had inoculated her with had cast off the beauty that had inflamed him. Nor did he know the meaning of that stealthy visit, which lasted only for a few minutes—so unexpected, for he had not seen her during many months, so singular, so unnatural, so unlike the world, returning gratitude for injury, benediction for infamy, until, after she had suddenly slipped away, he found by the side of the wall a small bottle of wine. That form and face, once more beautiful in his estimation than were those even now of his honourable affianced, entered among the imagery of his reveries; but the diamond eyes never displaced those of her gentle nature. He had wronged her, but they never filled with the fire of denunciation. She had looked her grief at him only through the tears he had raised in them, and had never attempted to dry. Yes, the diamond eyes entered everywhere, and into every form but that one where the red heat of revenge might have been expected to shrivel up and harden the issues of tears.

Further on in the same evening, the jailer, a good-natured sort of fellow, came in to him while he was absorbed in these thoughts. He was at the time sitting on his bed.

"A lady called in the dusk," he said, "and inquired if it was true you were here. I told her it was."

"And what more?" asked the youth, as he started out of his day-dream. "But, stay—what like was she?"

"I could scarcely see her," replied the man; "mid-

dling tall, rather young, as I thought — with a veil, through which I could see a pair of pretty, bright eyes."

"Were they like diamonds?" cried the student, absolutely forgetting that he was speaking to an ordinary mortal about very ordinary things.

"Ha, ha! I never saw diamond eyes," answered the jailer; "but I've seen glass ones in a doll's head looking very bright. Why, you 'aven't got mad, like some of the chicken-hearted birds in our cage?"

"Yes," cried the youth, "I'm frantic-mad; but stay, have patience. Did she want to see me?"

"Yes, she asked if she could; but when I told her she might, she seemed to get afeared to come into a jail, and said she would call again to-morrow night at the same hour."

"Can you tell me nothing more of what she was like?—not she who was here this evening?"

"Why, no; don't you think I know her kind? Oh, we see many o' them. They stick closest to the unfortunate, but 'tis because they are unfortunate themselves. Common thing, sir. Never feel for others till we have something to feel for ourselves. The visitor is a lady, sir."

"Can you tell me nothing more?" said the student eagerly. "How was she dressed?"

"A large, elegant cloak, sir; can scarcely say more."

"Was it trimmed with fur?"

"Not sure; but now, when I think, there was some lightish trimming—I mean lighter than the cloak."

"And the bonnet?"

"Why, I think velvet; but you'll maybe see her yourself to-morrow. The like o' her may do you good. The unfortunates who stick so close to the unfortunate do no good—they're a plaster that don't cure."

"It is Maria!" ejaculated Dewhurst, as the jailer shut the door. "She feels for me. and has come in

spite of her hard-hearted brother. Her diamond eyes are of another kind. They speak wealth, and love to bestow it. Her fortune is her own, and with that I may yet turn that wayward destiny, and laugh at my persecutors."

That ray of hope, illuminating his soul, changed almost in an instant the whole tenor of his mind. It might be compared to a stream of nervous energy, emanating from the brain, and shooting down through the network of chords, confirming convulsed muscles, and imparting to trembling members consistency of action and graces of motion. His reveries were scared by it, as owls under the influence of a sunbeam, and retreated into the dark recesses from which they had been charmed by the enchantment of despair. The personages of these visions were no longer avengers, casting upon him the burning beams of the diamond eyes. They were hopeful, pitiful; the flatterers and fawners were at their old work again, and Pleasure, with her siren face, smiled blandishments on him. Then he would justify the favours of the heaven he made for himself. He would be a logician, for once, in that kind of dialectics called the "wish-born."

"What was I afraid of?" he said to himself. "There is no turpitude, no shame in a fair bet. I was worsted in an honourable contest. What crazy power mocked me into the belief that all this that has befallen me was connected with the flaying of a bird? Don't we break the necks of innocent, yea, gentle fowls, not depredators like gulls, every day for our dinners? And don't ladies, as delicate as the unknown censor who dared to chastise me with her eyes, eat of the same, with a relish delightful to the tongues that pronounce the fine words of pity and philanthropy? But, even admitting there was cruelty in the act, where is the link that binds

it with the consequences which have brought me here? The bet upon the maternity was not an effect of the flaying of the bird. If it followed the prior bet, it would have followed another, in which I was gainer, equally the same. The mad energy which weaves in my head these day-dreams, and pursues me with these diamond eyes of wrath, is a lying power, and I shall master it by the strength of my reason, which at least is God's gift. Come, my Maria, as my good angel, and enable me to free my mind from illusions. I will sit and look into your eyes, as I have done so often. Yes, I will satisfy myself that they shine still with the lustre of love, hope, and happiness; and oh, let these, and these only, enter into my dreams."

And thus he satisfied himself, as all do, whose hope weaves the syllogisms of their wishes, and sits to see pleasure caught on the wing. The day passed apace to usher in the evening with its messenger of peace. Where, in that squalid place, would he seat her, whose peculiar province was the drawing-room? How would he receive her first look of sympathy? how repay it? with what words express his emotions? with what fervour kiss those lips redolent of forgiveness? with what ecstasy look into those eyes refulgent with love? He would control himself, and be calm. He would rehearse, that he might not fail in the forms of an interview on which hung his destiny, almost his life. The hour of seven arrived. He heard the heavy foot of the jailer come tramp, tramp along the lobby. There was a softer step behind, as if the echo of the heavier tread. A stern voice and a softer one mingled their notes. The door opened.

"My Mar——! O God! these scornful eyes again.'

"Not scornful now," replied the soft voice of a woman as she came forward, and stood before him in the dusk

"Were there light enough," she continued, "I would lift my veil and show you that they are capable of a kindlier light than even that they now carry, for the offering I made to heaven has been more than answered."

"Ah, you come to retract," he said, "to speak the truth at last. It is not too late to say you *are* the mother—the mother of the boy. Nor need you be ashamed: there may be reasons; but many a woman lives to repent——"

"Hold, sir," she cried with indignation, as she fixed upon him a look even more penetrating than that he so well remembered. "I have nothing to retract—nothing to be ashamed of. I came here out of pure sympathy, to make amends to one who has fallen for a prayer which burst from me in my anger. Your friend, who called for me, told me that you were a prisoner, and that your imprisonment was the consequence of the wager which it fell to me to decide. I did not come to repeat to you what I said before, that I am not the mother of the boy, but to make an explanation."

"And I have one to ask," said he.

"I am ready to answer."

"How could I be deceived?" said he. "I heard the boy address you as his mother."

"And that is what I came to explain. I have taxed my memory since Mr. Campbell insisted, in my presence, that Frederick did address me in the manner you have stated. Shall I tell you the precise words he used?"

"I wait for them."

"Well, they were, 'See ma.'"

"The very words; and were they not enough for proof and belief?"

"Yes, sir; but there are words which have two significations. Ma' is the contraction, as you know, for mamma, but it is pronounced the same as *naw*, which is a word which we use to designate those birds otherwise called gulls. I recollect that while I was unable to bear the sight of the tortured bird, and had turned my head in another direction, my nephew kept looking over the rails, and that, as he saw the struggling creature, he cried out to me the words you misconstrued. And thus the mystery is cleared up."

"Miserable and fatal error," he gasped out, as he staggered back. "And the connection!—the connection! There *was* retribution in those diamond eyes."

"What mean you, sir?"

"The bird's eyes that haunt me in my reveries, and enter into the sockets of my dream-beings!"

"Are you mad?"

"No; or the heavens are mad, with their swirling orbs and blazing comets, that rush sighing through space before some terrible power that will give them no respite, except with the condition that when they rest they die."

"Poor youth! so early doomed; I pity you."

"Ay, pity those who have no pity—those are the truly wretched; for pity, in the world's life, is the soul of reason's action. Ah, madam, it is those who have pity who do not need the pity of others, for they are generally free from the faults that produce the unhappiness that needs pity."

"But you have been punished, I admit, in a very strange and mysterious way; for the word used by the boy was the joining link of the two transactions, and you were led to misconstrue it—ay, and to take advantage of your misconstruction to get the better of your friend."

"I see it all."

"But I say you have been punished," continued she, consolingly; "and I perceive you are penitent—perhaps justice is satisfied; and when you are liberated, you may be the better for the lesson. I shall now reverse my prayer, and say to one I shall perhaps never see again, May God deal mercifully by you."

And with these words, she retreated. But her prayer was never answered, so far as man can judge of heaven's mysterious ways. The conviction settled down and down into his heart, that that apparently simple affair of killing a bird—which, even with the aggravation of all the cruelty exhibited by the thoughtless, yet certainly pitiless youth, is so apt to be viewed carelessly, or only with an avowal of disapprobation—which, if too much insisted on as an act to be taken up by superior retribution, is more apt still to be laughed at—was the cause of all the ills that had befallen him. The diamond eyes proved to him no fancy. But for all this, we are afforded, by what subsequently occurred, some means of explanation, which will be greedily laid hold of by minute philosophers. Even then it was to have been feared that the seeds of consumption had been deposited in favourable soil. In our difficulties about explanations of mental phenomena, we readily flee to diseases of the body, which, after all, only removes the mystery a step or two back in the dark.

It remains for me to add some words of personal experience. A considerable period after these occurrences, I had occasion—by a connection with a medium through which Dewhurst received from his father, whose fortunes had in the meantime failed, a petty allowance—to be the bearer to him, now liberated, of a quarter's payment. I forget the part of the town where I found him, but I have a distinct remembrance of the

room. It was a garret, almost entirely empty. He was lying on a kind of bed spread upon the floor. There was a small grate, with a handful of red cinders in it; only one chair, and a pot or pan or two. There was a woman moving between him and the fireplace, as if she had been preparing some warm drink or medicine of some kind for him. I did not know then, but I knew afterwards, that that woman was she who called upon him in prison, and deposited the small bottle of wine. Her love for him had always overcome any of those feelings of enmity, or something stronger, generally deemed so natural in one who has been robbed of her dearest treasure, and ruined. She alone had indeed not assumed the diamond eyes. The diamonds were elsewhere,—yea, in her heart, where she nourished pity for him who had so cruelly deserted her, and left her to a fate so common, and requiring only a hint to be understood by those who know the nature of women. After he had got out of prison, she sought him out, got the room for him, collected the paltry articles, procured food for him, and continued to nurse him till his death, with all the tenderness of a lover who had not only not been cast off, but cherished. He betrayed the ordinary symptoms of consumption, and the few words he muttered were those of thanks. I think he was buried in the Canongate Churchyard.

DAVID LORIMER.

"There is a history in all men's lives."—SHAKSPEARE.

IT has been often said, and, I believe, with truth, that there are few persons, however humble in station, whose life, if it has been of any duration, does not present some incidents of an interesting, if not instructive, nature.

Induced by a belief in this assertion as a general truth, and yet further by an opinion that, in my own particular case, there are occurrences which will be considered somewhat extraordinary, I venture to lay the following sketch of my life before the reader, in the hope that it will not be found altogether devoid of interest.

With the earlier part of my history, which had nothing whatever remarkable in it, I need not detain the reader further than to say that my father was, though not a wealthy, a respectable farmer in Lanarkshire; that he lived at ——, within fourteen miles of Glasgow; that I was well educated; and that, at the period when I take up my own history, I was in the eighteenth year of my age.

Having given these two or three particulars, I proceed:

It was in the year 18—, and during the week of the Glasgow Fair, which occurs in July, that my father, who had a very favourable opinion of my intelligence and sagacity, resolved to entrust me with a certain important mission. This was to send me to the fair of Glasgow to purchase a good draught horse for him.

I am not sure, however, that, with all the good opinion my father entertained of my shrewdness, he would have deputed me on the present occasion had he been able to go himself; but he was not able, being confined to bed by a severe attack of rheumatism. Be this as it may, however, the important business was put into my hands; and great was the joy it occasioned me, for it secured me in an opportunity of seeing Glasgow Fair—a scene which I had long desired to witness, and which I had seen only once when but a very young boy.

From the moment I was informed by my father of his intention of sending me to the fair, and which was only on the day preceding that on which the horse-market is held, my imagination became so excited that I could attend to nothing. I indeed maintained some appearance of working—for though the son of a farmer, I wrought hard—but accomplished little of the reality.

The joys and the splendours of Glasgow Fair, of which I had a dim but captivating recollection, rose before my mind's eye in brilliant confusion, putting to rout all other thoughts, and utterly paralyzing all my physical energies. Nor was the succeeding night less blessed with happy imaginings. My dreams were filled with visions of shows, Punch's opera, rope-dancers, tumblers, etc. etc., and my ears rang with the music of fiddles, bugles, tambourines, and bass drums. It was a delicious night with me; but the morning which brought an approach to the reality was still more so.

Getting up betimes, I arrayed myself in my best attire; which attire, as I well recollect, consisted of a white corduroy jacket, knee-breeches of the same colour and material, and a bright-red waistcoat. A "neat Barcelona," tied carelessly round my neck, and

a pair of flaming-red garters, at least two inches broad, wound round my legs just below the knee, and ending in a knot with two dependent ends hanging down, that waved jauntily as I walked, completed my equipment.

Thus arrayed, and with thirty pounds in my pocket to purchase a horse for my father, I took the road, stick in hand, for Glasgow.

It was a fine summer morning. I was in high spirits; and, in my red waistcoat and red garters, looked, I believe, as tight and comely a lad as might be seen.

Pushing on with a light heart and light step, I quickly reached the suburbs of the city, and in a few minutes more was within view and earshot of the sights and sounds of the fair. I saw the crowd; I got a glimpse of the canvas roofs of the shows at the end of the old bridge—the locality on which the fair was then held; and heard the screaming and braying of the cracked trumpets, the clanging of the cymbals, and the thunders of the bass drums.

My heart beat high on hearing these joyous sounds. I quickened my pace, and in a few seconds was in the thick of the throng that crowded the space in front of the long line of shows extending from the bridge to the Bridgegate. As it was yet several hours to the height of the horse-market, I resolved on devoting that interval to seeing some of the interesting sights which stood in such tempting array before me.

The first that fixed my regard was "The Great Lancashire Giant," whose portrait at full length—that is, at the length of some fifteen or twenty feet—flapped on a sheet of canvas nearly as large as the mainsail of a Leith smack.

This extraordinary personage was represented, in the picture, as a youth of sixteen, dressed in a ruffled

shirt, a red jacket, and white trousers; and his exhibitor assured the spectators that, though but a boy, he already measured nine feet in height and seven feet round the body; that each of his shoes would make a coffin for a child of five years old, and every stocking hold a sack of flour. Six full-grown persons, he added, could be easily buttoned within his waistcoat; and his tailor, he asserted, was obliged to mount a ladder when he measured him for a jacket.

Deeply interested by the astounding picture of this extraordinary youth, and the still more astounding description given of him by his exhibitor, I ascended the little ladder that conducted to the platform in front of the show, paid my twopence—the price of admission—and in the next minute was in the presence of "The Great Lancashire Giant;" a position which enabled me to make discoveries regarding that personage that were not a little mortifying.

In the first place, I found that, instead of being a youth of sixteen, he was a man of at least six-and-thirty; in the next, that if it had not been for the raised dais on which he stood, the enormous thickness of the soles of his shoes, and the other palpably fictitious contrivances and expedients by which his dimensions were enlarged, he would not greatly have exceeded the size of my own father. I found, in short, that the tremendous "Lancashire Giant" was merely a pretty tall man, and nothing more.

Quitting this exhibition, and not a little displeased at being so egregiously bitten, I passed on to the next, which was "Mr. Higgenbotham's Royal Menagerie. The Noblest Collection of Wild Beasts ever seen in the Civilised World."

This was a splendid affair. On a narrow stage in front were seated four fat red-faced musicians, in beef-

eater coats, puffing and blowing on bugles and trombones. Close by these, stood a thin, sharp-eyed, sallow-complexioned man in plain clothes, beating a huge drum, and adding the music of a set of Pandean pipes, which were stuck into his bosom, to the general harmony. This was Mr. Higgenbotham himself.

But it was the paintings on the immense field of canvas above that particularly attracted my attention. On this field were exhibited an appalling collection of the most terrific monsters: lions, as large as cows, gambolling amongst rocks; ourang-outangs, of eight feet in height, walking with sticks in their hands, as grave and stately as drum-majors; and a serpent, as thick as a hogshead, and of interminable length—in truth, without any beginning, middle, or end—twining round an unfortunate black, and crushing him to death in its enormous folds.

All this was irresistible. So up the stair I sprang, paid my sixpence, and in a moment after found myself in the centre of the well-sawdusted area in the interior, gazing on the various birds and beasts in the cages around me. It was by no means a perplexing task; for, as in the case of "The Great Lancashire Giant," the fulfilment of the inside but little corresponded with the promise of the out. The principal part of the collection I found to consist of half-a-dozen starved monkeys, as many parrots — grey and green, an indescribable monster, in a dark corner, strongly suspected by some of the spectators of being a boy in a polar bear's skin, a bird of paradise, and a hedgehog, which they dignified with the name of a porcupine.

"Whaur's the lions, and the teegers, and the elephants, and the boy instructor, and the black man?" said a disappointed countryman, addressing a fellow in a short canvas frock or overall, who was crossing the area with a bucket of water.

"Ah! them's all in the other caravan," replied the man, "vich should 'ave been here on Monday night, but hasn't coom yet, and we suppose has broken down by the way; but there's a hanimal worth 'em all," he added, pointing to the indescribable monster in the dark corner. "The most curiousest ever was seen. Take a look on him; and if you don't own he is, I'll heat him, skin and all. They calls him the great Guampa from South America."

Having said this, the fellow, desirous, for reasons best known to himself, to avoid further questioning, hurried away, and disappeared at a side door.

It was just as this man left us, and as the small crowd of spectators, of whom I was one, who had surrounded him, were dispersing, that a gentleman—or a person, at least, who had the air and manner of one, although somewhat broken down in his apparel—came close up to me, and whispered in my ear, in a perfectly calm and composed tone—

"My lad, you are robbed."

With a start of horror, and a face as pale as death, I clapped my hand on the outside of my buttoned jacket, to feel for my pocket-book, which I carefully deposited in an inside pocket. It was gone.

"Be calm—be composed, my lad," said the gentleman, marking my excessive agitation, and seeing that I was about to make some outcry. "The fellows will bolt on the least alarm; and as there are three or four of them, may force their way out, if driven to extremity. Leave the matter to me, and I'll manage it for you."

During all this time, the stranger, who had spoken in a very low tone, carefully abstained from looking towards those of whom he was speaking, and wore such an air of composure and indifference, that no one could

possibly have suspected for a moment what was the subject of his communication to me.

Having made this communication, and desired me to remain where I was, and to exhibit no symptom of anything particular having happened, my friend, as I could not but reckon him, went out for an instant.

When he returned, he kept hovering about the entrance into the show, as if to prevent the egress of any one, but without making any sign to me, or even looking at me. My agitation during this interval was excessive; and although I strictly obeyed my friend's injunctions, notwithstanding that I knew not to what they were to lead, I could not suppress the dreadful feelings by which I was distracted. I, however, did all I could to refrain from exhibiting any outward sign of consciousness of my loss.

To return to my friend. He had not stood, I think, more than a minute at the entrance to the menagerie, when I observed three fellows, after having winked to each other, edging towards it. My friend, on seeing them approach, planted himself in the doorway, and, addressing the first, at the same time extending his arms to keep him back, said—

"Stop a moment, my lad, I have something to say to you."

The fellow seemed taken aback for a moment by this salutation; but, quickly regaining his natural effrontery, he, with a tremendous oath, made an attempt to push past, when four policemen suddenly presented themselves at the entrance.

"Come away, my lads," said my friend, addressing them. "Just in time; a minute later, and the birds would have been flown. Guard the door there a moment." Then, turning to the astonished spectators who were assembled in the area—"Ladies and gentle-

men," he said, "there has been a robbery committed here within these fifteen minutes. I saw it done, and know the person who did it; but as he has several colleagues here, all of whom I may not have discovered, I have no doubt that the pocket-book—the article stolen—has been long since transferred to other hands than those that first took it. It is therefore necessary that we should all, without any exception, submit to a search of our persons by the officers here."

No objection to this proceeding having been offered by any of the persons present, the search began; my friend submitting himself the first.

The operation was a tedious one; for it was unsuccessful. One after another, including the three suspicious characters already alluded to, was searched, but no pocket-book was found. At length, the last person was taken in hand; and he, too, proved innocent—at least of the possession of my lost treasure.

I was in despair at this result, thinking that my friend must have been mistaken as to the robbery—that is, as to his having witnessed it—and that my money was irretrievably gone. No such despair of the issue, however, came over my friend—he did not appear in the least disconcerted; but, on the completion of the fruitless search, merely nodded his head, uttering an expressive humph.

"It's gone," said I to him in bitter anguish.

"Patience a bit, my lad," he replied, with a smile. "The pocket-book is within these four walls, and we'll find it too."

Turning now to one of the men belonging to the establishment, he desired him to bring one of the rakes with which they levelled the sawdust in the area.

It was brought; when he set the man to work with it—to rake up, slowly and deliberately, the surface of

the sawdust, himself vigilantly superintending the operation, and directing the man to proceed regularly, and to leave no spot untouched. I need not say with what intense interest I watched this proceeding. I felt as if life or death were in the issue; for the loss of such a sum as £30, although it could not, perhaps, be considered a very great one, was sufficiently large to distress my father seriously; and already some idea of never facing him again, should the money not be recovered, began to cross my mind.

All thoughts, however, of this or any other kind were absorbed, for the moment, by the deep interest which I took in the operations of the man with the rake; an interest this in which all present, less or more, participated.

For a long while this search also was fruitless. More than half the area had been gone over, and there was yet no appearance of my lost treasure.

At length, however—oh! how shall I describe the joy I felt?—a sweep of the rake threw the well-known pocket-book on the surface of the sawdust. I darted on it, clutched it, tore it open, and saw the bank-notes apparently untouched. I counted them. They were all there.

"I thought so; I thought we should find it," said, with a calm smile, the gentleman who had been so instrumental in its recovery.

The whole proceedings of the thief or thieves, so promptly and correctly conjectured by my friend, were now obvious. Finding that passing it from hand to hand would not avail them, he who was last in possession of it had, on the search commencing, dropt it on the ground, and shuffled it under the sawdust with his foot.

The police now requested my friend to point out the

person who had committed the robbery, that they might apprehend him; but this he declined, saying that he was not quite sure of the man, and that he would not like to run the risk of blaming an innocent person; adding, with the quiet smile that seemed to be natural to him, that as the money was recovered, it might be as well to let the matter drop. The police for some time insisted on my friend pointing out the man; but as he continued firmly to decline interfering further in the matter, they gave it up and left the place.

Every one saw that it was benevolence, however impoperly exerted, that induced my friend to refuse giving up the culprit; and as I had now recovered my money, I felt pretty much in the same disposition—that was, to allow him to fall into other hands.

I now presented the man who had been employed to rake the area with five shillings, for his trouble. But how or in what way was I to reward the friendly person to whom I was wholly indebted for the recovery of my pocket-book? This puzzled me sadly. Money, at least any such sum as I could spare, I could not offer one who, notwithstanding the little deficiencies in his apparel formerly noticed, had so much the appearance and manner of a gentleman. I was greatly at a loss. In the meantime, my friend and I left the exhibition together; he lecturing me the while, although in the most kindly manner, on the danger of going into crowded places with large sums of money about one's person.

He said he had seen a good deal of the world, had resided long in London, and knew all the tricks of the swell mob.

"It was my knowledge and experience of these gentry," he added, "that enabled me to manage your

little matter so successfully." We were at this time passing along Stockwell Street, when, observing a respectable-looking tavern, it struck me that I might, without offence, ask my friend to take a little refreshment,—a glass of wine or so.

With some hesitation, I proposed it.

He smiled; and as if rather complying with my humour, or as if unwilling to offend me by a refusal, said, "Well, my young friend, I have no objection, although I am not greatly in the habit of going to taverns. Not there, however," he added, seeing me moving towards the house on which I had fixed my eye. "There is a house in the Saltmarket, which, on the rare occasions I do go to a tavern, and that is chiefly for a sight of the papers, I always frequent. They are decent, respectable people. So we'll go there, if you please; that is, if it be quite the same to you."

I said it was, and that I would cheerfully accompany him wherever he chose.

This point settled, we proceeded to the Saltmarket; when my friend, who, by the way, had now told me that his name was Lancaster, conducted me up a dark, dirty-looking close, and finally into a house of anything but respectable appearance. The furniture was scanty, and what was of it much dilapidated: half the backs of half the chairs were broken off, the tables were dirty and covered with stains and the circular marks of drinking measures. A tattered sofa stood at one end of the apartment, the walls were hung with paltry prints, and the small, old-fashioned, dirty windows hung with dirtier curtains.

To crown all, we met, as we entered, a huge, blowzy, tawdrily dressed woman, of most forbidding appearance, who, I was led to understand, was the mistress of the house. Between this person and Mr.

Lancaster I thought I perceived a rapid secret signal pass as we came in, but was not sure.

All this—namely, the appearance of the house and its mistress, the shabbiness of the entrance to the former, the secret signal, etc. etc.—surprised me a little; but I suspected nothing wrong—never dreamt of it.

On our taking our seats in the apartment into which we had been shown, I asked my good genius, Mr. Lancaster, what he would choose to drink.

He at once replied that he drank nothing but wine; spirits and malt liquors, he said, always did him great injury.

But too happy to be able to contribute in any way to the gratification of one who had rendered me so essential a service, I immediately ordered a bottle of the best port, he having expressed a preference for that description of wine.

It was brought; when Mr. Lancaster, kindly assuming the character of host, quickly filled our glasses, when we pledged each other and drank.

Wine, at that time, was no favourite liquor of mine, so that I soon began to show some reluctance to swallowing it.

Mr. Lancaster, perceiving this, began to banter me on my abstemiousness, and to urge me to do more justice to the wine, which he said was excellent.

Prevailed on partly by his urgency, and partly by a fear of displeasing him by further resistance, I now took out my glass as often as he filled it.

The consequence was, that I soon felt greatly excited; and eventually so much so, that I not only readily swallowed bumper after bumper, but, when our bottle was done, insisted on another being brought in; forgetting everything but my debt of gratitude to

Mr. Lancaster, and losing sight, for the moment at any rate, of all my obligations, in the delight with which I listened to his entertaining conversation. For another half hour we went on merrily, and the second bottle of wine was nearly finished, when I suddenly felt a strange sinking sensation come over me. The countenance of Mr. Lancaster, who sat opposite me, seemed to disappear, as did also all the objects with which I was surrounded.

From that moment I became unconscious of all that passed. I sank down on the floor in the heavy sleep, or rather in the utter insensibility, of excessive intoxication.

On awaking, which was not until a late hour of the night, I found the scene changed. The room was dark, the bottles and glasses removed, and my friend Mr. Lancaster gone.

It was some seconds before I felt myself struck by this contrast; that is, before I fully recollected the circumstances which had preceded my unconsciousness. These, however, gradually unfolded themselves, until the whole stood distinctly before me. After having sat up for a second or two—for I found myself still on the floor when I awoke, having been left to lie where I fell—and having recalled all the circumstances of the day's occurrences, I instinctively clapped my hand to the breast of my jacket to feel for my pocket-book. It was again gone. Thinking at first that it might have dropt out while I slept, I began groping about the floor; but there was no pocket-book there. In great alarm I now started to my feet, and began calling on the house. My calls were answered by the landlady herself, who, with a candle in her hand, and a fierce expression of face, flushed apparently with drink, entered the apartment, and sternly demanded what I

wanted, and what I meant by making such a noise in her house.

Taking no notice of the uncourteous manner in which she had addressed me, I civilly asked her what had become of Mr. Lancaster.

"Who's Mr. Lancaster?" she said fiercely. "I know no Mr. Lancaster."

"The gentleman," I replied, "who came in here with me, and who drank wine with me."

"I know nothing about him," said the virago; "I never saw him before."

"That's strange," said I; "he told me that he was in the habit of frequenting this house."

"If he did so, he told you a lie," replied the lady; "and I tell you again, that I know nothing about him, and that I never saw him before, nor ever expect to see him again."

I now informed her that I missed a pocket-book containing a considerable sum of money, and, simply enough, asked her if she had it, or knew anything about it.

At this, her rage, which before she seemed to have great difficulty in controlling, burst out in the wildest fury.

"I know nothing about your pocket-book," she exclaimed, stamping passionately on the floor; "nor do I believe you had one. It's all a fetch to bilk me out of my reckoning; but I'll take care of you, you swindler! I'm not to be done that way. Come, down with the price of the two bottles of wine you and your pal drank—fifteen shillings—or I'll have the worth of them out of your skin." And she flourished the candlestick in such a way as led me to expect every instant that it would descend on my skull.

Terrified by the ferocious manner and threatening attitude of the termagant, and beginning to feel that

the getting safe out of the house ought to be considered as a most desirable object, I told her, in the most conciliatory manner I could assume, that I had not a farthing beyond two or three shillings, which she was welcome to; all my money having been in the pocket-book which I had lost—I dared not say of which I had been robbed.

"Let's see what you have, then," she said, extending her hand to receive the loose silver I had spoken of. I gave it to her.

"Now," she said, "troop, troop with you; walk off, walk off," motioning me towards the outer door, "and be thankful you have got off so cheaply, after swindling me out of my reckoning, and trying to injure the character of my house."

But too happy at the escape permitted me, I hurried out of the house, next down the stair—a pretty long one—at a couple of steps, and rushed into the street.

I will not here detain the reader with any attempt at describing my feelings on this occasion: he will readily conceive them, on taking into account all the circumstances connected with my unhappy position. My money gone now, there was no doubt, irretrievably; the market over, no horse bought, the hour late, and I an entire stranger in the city, without a penny in my pocket; my senses confused, and a mortal sickness oppressing me, from the quantity of wine I had drunk, and which, I began to suspect, had been drugged.

Little as I was then conversant with the ways of the town, I knew there was but one quarter where I could apply or hope for any assistance in the recovery of my property. This was the police office.

Thither I accordingly ran, inquiring my way as I went—for I knew not where it was—with wild distraction in my every look and movement.

On reaching the office, I rushed breathlessly into it, and began telling my story as promptly and connectedly as my exhaustion and agitation would permit. My tale was patiently listened to by the two or three men whom I found on duty in the office. When I had done, they smiled and shook their heads; expressions which I considered as no good augury of the recovery of my pocket-book.

One of the men—a sergeant apparently—now put some minute queries to me regarding the personal appearance of my friend Mr. Lancaster. I gave him the best description of that gentleman I could; but neither the sergeant nor any of the others seemed to recognise him. They had no doubt, however, they said, that he was a professed swindler, and in all probability one of late importation into the city; that there was little question that he was the person who had robbed me; adding, what was indeed obvious enough, that he had assisted in the recovery of my pocket-book from the first set of thieves who assailed me, that he might secure it for himself.

The house in the Saltmarket, which I also described as well as I could, they knew at once, saying it was one of the most infamous dens in the city. The men now promised that they would use every exertion in their power to recover my money, but gave me to understand that there was little or no hope of success. The event justified their anticipations. They could discover no trace of Lancaster; and as to the house in the Saltmarket, there was not the slightest evidence of any connection whatever between its mistress, or any other of its inmates, and either the robber or the robbery. The police indeed searched the house; but of course to no purpose.

Being, as I have already said, penniless, and thus

without the means of going anywhere else, I remained in the police office all night; and, in the hope every hour of hearing something of my pocket-book, hung about it all next day till towards the evening, when the sergeant, of whom I have before spoken, came up to me as I was sauntering about the gate, and told me that it was useless my hanging on any longer about the office; that all would be done in my case that could be done; but that, in the meantime, I had better go home, leaving my address; and that if anything occurred, I would instantly be informed of it. "But I think it but right to tell you, young man," he added, "that there is scarcely any chance whatever of your ever recovering a sixpence of your money. I mention this to prevent you indulging in any false hopes. It is best you should know the worst at once."

Satisfied that the man spoke truly, and that it was indeed useless my hanging on any longer, I gave him my name and address, and went away, although it was with a heavy heart, and without knowing whither I should go; for to my father's house I could not think of returning, after what had happened. I would not have faced him for the world. In this matter, indeed, I did my father a great injustice; for although a little severe in temper, he was a just and reasonable man, and would most certainly have made all allowances for what had occurred to me.

The determination—for it now amounted to that—to which I had come, not to return home, was one, therefore, not warranted by any good reason; it was wholly the result of one of those mad impulses which so frequently lead youthful inexperience into error.

On leaving the vicinity of the police office, I sauntered towards the High Street without knowing or caring whither I went. Having reached the street just

named, I proceeded downwards, still heedless of my way, until I found myself in the Saltmarket, the scene of my late disaster.

Curiosity, or perhaps some vague, absurd idea of seeing something or other, I could not tell what, that might lead to the recovery of my pocket-book, induced me to look about me to see if I could discover the tavern in which I had been robbed. I was thus employed—that is, gaping and staring at the windows of the lower flats of the houses on either side of the street, for I did not recollect on which was the house I wanted —when a smart little man, dressed in a blue surtout, with a black stock about his neck, and carrying a cane in his hand, made up to me with a—

"Looking for any particular place, my lad?"

Taken unawares, and not choosing to enter into any explanations with a stranger, I simply answered, "No, no."

"Because if you were," continued my new acquaintance, "I should have been glad to have helped you. But I say, my lad—excuse me," he went on, now looking earnestly in my face, and perceiving by my eyes that I had been weeping, which was indeed the case—"you seem to be distressed. What has happened you? I don't ask from any impertinent curiosity, but from sympathy, seeing you are a stranger."

Words of kindness in the hour of distress, by whomsoever offered, at once find their way to the heart, and open up the sluices of its pent-up feelings. The friendly address of the stranger had this effect on me in the present instance. I told him at once what had occurred to me.

"Bad business, my lad; bad business indeed," he said. "But don't be cast down. Fair weather comes after foul. You'll soon make all up again."

This was commonplace enough comfort; but without minding the words, the intention was good, and with that I was gratified.

My new friend, who had learnt from what I told him that I was penniless, now proposed that I should take share of a bottle of ale with him. Certain recollections of another friend, namely, Mr. Lancaster, made me hesitate, indeed positively decline, this invitation at first; but on my new acquaintance pressing his kindness, and the melancholy truth occurring to me that I had now no pocket-book to lose, I yielded, and accompanied him to a tavern at the foot of the High Street. I may add that I was the more easily induced to this, that I was in a dreadful state of exhaustion, having tasted nothing in the shape of either food or drink for nearly thirty hours.

Having entered the tavern, a bottle of ale and a plate of biscuit quickly stood before us. My entertainer filled up the glasses; when, having presented me with one, he raised his own to his lips, wished me "better luck," and tossed it off. I quickly followed his example, and never before or since drank anything with so keen a relish. After we had drunk a second glass each—

"Well, my lad," said my new acquaintance, "what do you propose doing? Do you intend returning to the plough-tail, eh? I should hardly think you'll venture home again after such a cursed mishap."

I at once acknowledged that I did not intend returning home again; but as to what I should do, I did not know.

"Why, now," replied my entertainer, "I think a stout, good-looking, likely young fellow as you are need be at no loss. There's the army. Did you ever think of that, eh? The only thing for a lad of spirit. Smart clothes, good living, and free quarters, with a chance of

promotion. The chance, said I? Why, I might say the certainty. Bounty too, you young dog! A handful of golden guineas, and pretty girls to court in every town. List, man, list," he shouted, clapping me on the shoulder, "and your fortune's made!"

List! It had never occurred to me before. I had never thought, never dreamt of it. But now that the idea was presented to me, I by no means disliked it. It was not, however, the flummery of my new acquaintance, who, I need hardly say, was neither more nor less than a sergeant in coloured clothes, assumed, I suppose, for the purpose of taking young fellows like myself unawares,—I say it was not his balderdash, which, young and raw as I was, I fully perceived, that reconciled me to the notion of listing. It was because I saw in it a prompt and ready means of escaping the immediate destitution with which I was threatened, my foolish determination not to return home having rather gained strength than weakened, notwithstanding a painful sense of the misery which my protracted absence must have been occasioning at home. To the sergeant's proposal of listing, therefore, I at once assented; when the former calling in the landlord, tendered me in his presence the expressive shilling.

The corps into which I had listed was the ——, then lying in the Tower, London, there being only the sergeant and two or three men of the regiment in Glasgow recruiting. The matter of listing settled, the sergeant bespoke me a bed for the night in the tavern in which we were, that being his own quarters.

On the following day I was informed, much to my surprise, although by no means to my regret, that a detachment of recruits for the —— were to be sent off that evening at nine o'clock by the track boat for Edinburgh, and from thence by sea to the headquarters of

the regiment at London, and that I was to be of the number. At nine o'clock of the evening, accordingly, we were shipped at Port-Dundas.

Before leaving Glasgow, however, I made one last call at the police office to inquire whether any discoveries had been made regarding my pocket-book, but found that nothing whatever had been heard of it.

On the following day we reached Edinburgh; on the next we were embarked on board a Leith smack for London, where we arrived in safety on the fourth day thereafter, and were marched to the Tower, which was at the time the headquarters of the regiment. Amongst the young men who were of the party who came up with me from Scotland, there was one with whom I became particularly intimate, and who was subsequently my comrade. His name was John Lindsay, a native of Glasgow. He was about my own age, or perhaps a year older—a lively, active, warm-hearted lad, but of a restless, roving disposition.

It was, I think, about a fortnight after our arrival in London, that Lindsay one day, while rummaging a small trunk in the barrack-room, which had formed the entire of his travelling equipage from Scotland, stumbled on a letter, with whose delivery he had been entrusted by some one in Glasgow, but which he had entirely forgotten. It was addressed in a scrawling hand—"To Susan Blaikie, servant with Henry Wallscourt, Esq., 19, Grosvenor Square, London."

"Here's a job, Davy," said Lindsay, holding up the letter. "I promised faithfully to deliver this within an hour after my arrival in London, and here it is still. But better late than never. Will you go with me and see the fair maiden to whom this is addressed? It contains, I believe, a kind of introduction to her, and may perhaps lead to some sport."

I readily closed with Lindsay's proposal, and in ten minutes after we set out for Grosvenor Square, which we had no difficulty in finding. Neither were we long in discovering No. 19, the residence of Henry Wallscourt, Esq. It was a magnificent house, everything about it bespeaking a wealthy occupant.

Leaving me on the flagstones, Lindsay now descended into the area; but in two or three minutes returned, and motioned me with his finger to come to him.

I did so, when he told me that he had seen Susan Blaikie, and that she had invited us to come in. Into the house we accordingly went, and were conducted by Susan, a lively, pretty girl, who welcomed us with great cordiality, into what appeared to be a housekeeper's room.

My comrade, Lindsay, having given Susan all the Scotch, particularly Glasgow, news in his budget, the latter left the room for a few minutes, when she returned with a tray of cold provisions—ham, fowl, and roast beef.

Placing these before us, and adding a bottle of excellent porter, she invited us to fall-to. We did so, and executed summary justice on the good things placed before us.

After this we sat for about half an hour, when we rose to depart. This, however, she would not permit till we had promised that we would come, on the following night, and take tea with her and one or two of her fellow-servants. This promise we readily gave, and as willingly kept. One of the party, on the night of the tea-drinking, was the footman of the establishment, Richard Digby—a rakish, dissipated-looking fellow, with an affected air, and an excessively refined and genteel manner, that is, as he himself thought it. To others, at least to me, he appeared an egregious puppy;

the obvious spuriousness of his assumed gentility inspiring a disgust which I found it difficult to suppress. Neither could I suppress it so effectually as to prevent the fellow discovering it. He did so; and the consequence was the rise of a hearty and mutual dislike, which, however, neither of us evinced by any overt act.

Having found the society of our fair countrywoman and her friends very agreeable, we—that is, Lindsay and myself—became frequent visitors; drinking tea with her and her fellow-servants at least two or three times a week. While this was going on, a detachment of the new recruits, of whom Lindsay was one, was suddenly ordered to Chatham. I missed my comrade much after his departure; but as I had by this time established an intimacy with Susan and her fellow-servants on my own account, I still continued visiting there, and drinking tea occasionally as formerly.

It was on one of these occasions, and about ten days after Lindsay had left London, that as I was leaving Mr. Wallscourt's house at a pretty late hour—I think about eleven at night—I was suddenly collared by two men, just as I had ascended the area stair, and was about to step out on the pavement.

"What's this for?" said I, turning first to the one and then to the other of my captors.

"We'll tell you that presently," replied one of the men, who had by this time begun to grope about my person, as if searching for something. In a moment after—"Ah! let's see what's this," he said, plunging his hand into one of my coat-pockets, and pulling out a silver table-spoon. "All right," he added. "Come away, my lad;" and the two forthwith began dragging me along.

The whole affair was such a mystery to me, and of such sudden occurrence, that it was some seconds before

I could collect myself sufficiently to put any such calm and rational queries to my captors as might elicit an explanation of it. All that I could say was merely to repeat my inquiry as to the meaning of the treatment I was undergoing—resisting instinctively, the while, the efforts of the men to urge me forward. This last, however, was vain; for they were two powerful fellows, and seemed scarcely to feel the resistance I made. To my reiterated demand of explanation they merely replied that I should have it presently, but that they rather thought I did not stand greatly in need of it.

Obliged to rest satisfied, in the meantime, with such evasive answers, and finding resistance useless, indeed uncalled for, as I was unconscious of any crime, I now went peaceably along with the men. Whither they were conducting me the reader will readily guess; it was to Bow Street.

On being brought into the office, the men conducted me up to a person who, seated at a desk, was busily employed making entries in a large book. One of my captors having whispered something into this person's ear, he turned sharply round and demanded my name. I gave it him.

"The others?" he said.

"What others?" I replied. "I have only one name, and I have given it."

"Pho, pho!" exclaimed he. "Gentlemen of your profession have always a dozen. However, we'll take what you have given in the meantime." And he proceeded to make some entries in his book. They related to me, but I was not permitted to see what they were. The table-spoon which had been found in my pocket, and which had been placed on the desk before the official already spoken of, was now labelled and put past. and I was ordered to be removed.

During all this time I had been loudly protesting my innocence of any crime; but no attention whatever was paid to me. So little effect, indeed, had my protestations, that one would have thought, judging by the unmoved countenances around me, that they did not hear me at all, for they went on speaking to each other, quite in the same way as if I had not been present. The only indication I could perceive of a consciousness of my being there, and of their hearing what I said, was an occasional faint smile of incredulity. At one time, provoked by my importunity and my obstinate iteration of my innocence, the official who was seated at the desk turned fiercely round, exclaiming—

"The spoon, the spoon, friend; what do you say to that—found in your pocket, eh?"

I solemnly protested that I knew not how it came there; that I had never put it there, nor had the least idea of its being in my possession till it was produced by those that searched me.

"A very likely story," said the official, turning quietly round to his book; "but we'll see all about that by-and-by. Remove him, men."

And I was hurried away, and locked up in a cell for the night.

I cannot say that, when left to myself, I felt much uneasiness regarding the result of the extraordinary matter that had occurred. I felt perfectly satisfied that, however awkward and unpleasant my situation was in the meantime, the following day would clear all up, and set me at liberty with an unblemished character. From all that had taken place, I collected that I was apprehended on a charge of robbery; that is, of abstracting property from Mr. Wallscourt's house, of which the silver spoon found in my possession was considered a proof. There was much, however, in the

matter of painful and inexplicable mystery. How came the constables to be so opportunely in the way when I left the house? and, more extraordinary still, how came the silver spoon into my possession? Regarding neither of these circumstances could I form the slightest plausible conjecture; but had no doubt that, whether they should ever be explained or not, my entire innocence of all such guilt as the latter of them pointed at, would clearly appear. But, as the saying has it, "I reckoned without my host." On the following morning I was brought before the sitting magistrate, and, to my inexpressible surprise, on turning round a little, saw Richard Digby in the witness-box. Thinking at first that he was there to give some such evidence as would relieve me from the imputation under which I lay, I nodded to him; but he took no further notice of the recognition than by looking more stern than before.

Presently my case was entered on. Digby was called on to state what he had to say to the matter. Judge of my consternation, gentle reader, when I heard him commence the following statement:—

Having premised that he was servant with Mr. Wallscourt, of No. 19, Grosvenor Square, he proceeded to say that during the space of the three previous weeks he had from time to time missed several valuable pieces of plate belonging to his master; that this had happened repeatedly before he could form the slightest conjecture as to who the thief could possibly be. At last it occurred to him that the abstraction of the plate corresponded, in point of time, with the prisoner's (my) introduction to the house—in other words, that it was from that date the robberies commenced, nothing of the kind having ever happened before; that this circumstance led him to suspect me; that in consequence he had on the previous night placed a silver table-spoon

in such a situation in the servants' hall as should render it likely to be seen by the prisoner when he came to tea, Susan Blaikie having previously informed him that he was coming; that, shortly after the prisoner's arrival, he contrived, by getting Susan and some of the other servants out of the room, on various pretexts, to have the prisoner left alone for several minutes; that, on his return, finding the spoon gone, he had no longer any doubt of the prisoner's guilt; that, on feeling satisfied of this, he immediately proceeded to the nearest station-house, and procuring two constables, or police-men, stationed them at the area gate, with instructions to seize the prisoner the moment he came out; and that if the spoon was found on him—of which he had no doubt—to carry him away to Bow Street.

Such, then, was Mr. Digby's statement of the affair; and a very plausible and connected one, it must be allowed, it was. It carried conviction to all present, and elicited from the presiding magistrate a high encomium on that person's fidelity, ability, and promptitude.

The silver spoon, labelled as I had seen it, was now produced, when Mr. Wallscourt, who was also present, was called on to identify it. This he at once did, after glancing at the crest and initials which were engraven on the handle. The charge against me thus laid and substantiated, I was asked if I had anything to say in my own defence.

Defence! what defence could I make against an accusation so strongly put, and so amply supported by circumstances? None. I could meet it only by denial, and by assertions of innocence. This, however, I did, and with such energy and earnestness—for horror and despair inspired me with both courage and eloquence—that a favourable impression was perceptible in the court. The circumstantial statement of Digby, how-

ever, with all its strong probabilities, was not to be overturned by my bare assertions; and the result was, that I was remanded to prison to stand trial at the ensuing assizes, Mr. Wallscourt being bound over to prosecute.

Wretched, however, as my situation was, I had not been many hours in prison when I regained my composure; soothed by the reflection that, however disgraceful or unhappy my position might be, it was one in which I had not deserved being placed. I was further supported by the conviction, which even the result of my late examination before the magistrate had not in the least weakened, that my innocence would yet appear, and that in sufficient time to save me from further legal prosecution. Buoyed up by these reflections, I became, if not cheerful, at least comparatively easy in my mind. I thought several times during my imprisonment of writing to my father,—to whom, by the way, as I should have mentioned before, I wrote from Edinburgh, when on my way to London, in order to relieve the minds of my mother and himself from any apprehensions of anything more serious having happened me, telling them of my loss, and the way it had occurred, but without telling them that I had listed, or where I was going,—I say I thought several times during my confinement of writing to my father, and informing him of the unhappy circumstances in which I was placed; but, on reflection, it occurred to me that such a proceeding would only give him and the rest of the family needless pain, seeing that he could be of no service to me whatever. I therefore dropped the idea, thinking it better that they should know nothing about the matter—nothing, at least, until my trial was over, and my innocence established; concomitant events, as I had no doubt they would prove. In the meantime

the day of trial approached. It came, and I stood naked and defenceless; for I had no money to employ counsel, no friends to assist me with advice. I stood at the bar of the Old Bailey shielded only by my innocence; a poor protection against evidence so strong and circumstantial as that which pointed to my guilt.

My trial came on. It was of short duration. Its result, what every one who knew anything of the matter foresaw but myself. I was found guilty, and sentenced to fourteen years' transportation.

As on a former occasion, I will leave it to the reader himself to form a conception of what my feelings were when this dreadful sentence rung in my ears—so horrible, so unexpected. A sudden deafness struck me that, commingling all sounds, rendered them unintelligible; a film came over my eyes; my heart fluttered strangely, and my limbs trembled so that I thought I should have sunk on the floor; but, making a violent effort, I supported myself; and in a few seconds these agitating sensations so far subsided as to allow of my retiring from the bar with tolerable steadiness and composure.

It was several days, however, before I regained entire possession of myself, and before I could contemplate my position in all its bearings with anything like fortitude or resignation. On attaining this state, a thousand wild schemes for obtaining such a reconsideration of my case as might lead to the discovery of my innocence presented themselves to my mind. I thought of addressing a letter to the judge who had tried me; to the foreman of the jury who had found me guilty; to the prosecutor, Mr. Wallscourt; to the Secretary of State; to the King. A little subsequent reflection, however, showed me the utter hopelessness of any such proceeding, as I had still only my simple, unsupported asser-

tions to oppose to the strong array of positive and circumstantial evidence against me; that, therefore, no such applications as I contemplated could be listened to for a moment. Eventually satisfied of this, I came to the resolution of submitting quietly to my fate in the meantime, trusting that some circumstance or other would, sooner or later, occur that would lead to a discovery of the injustice that had been done me.

Writing to my father I considered now out of the question. The same reasons that induced me to abstain from writing him before my trial, presented themselves in additional force to prevent me writing him after. I resolved that he should never know of the misfortune, however undeserved, that had befallen me. I had all along—that is, since my confinement—looked for some letter or other communication from Lindsay. Sometimes I even hoped for a visit from him. But I was disappointed. I neither saw nor heard anything of him; and from this circumstance concluded that he, too, thought me guilty, and that this was the cause of his desertion of me. Friendless and despised, I at once abandoned myself to fate.

Of poor Susan Blaikie, however, I did hear something; and that was, that she was discharged from her situation. This intelligence distressed me much, although I had foreseen that it must necessarily happen.

In the apartment or cell into which I was placed after having received sentence, there were five or six young men in similar circumstances with myself—not as regarded innocence of crime, but punishment. They were all under sentence of banishment for various terms.

From these persons I kept as much aloof as possible. My soul sickened at the contamination to which I was exposed by the society of such ruffians, for they were

all of the very worst description of London characters, and I did all I could to maintain the distinction between myself and them, which my innocence of all crime gave me a right to observe.

Under this feeling, it was my habit to sit in a remote part of the cell, and to take no share whatever either in the conversation or in the coarse practical jokes with which they were in the habit of beguiling the tedium of their confinement.

There was one occasion, however, on which I felt myself suddenly caught by an interest in their proceedings.

Seeing them one day all huddled together, listening with great delight to one of their number who was reading a letter aloud, I gradually approached nearer, curious to know what could be in this letter to afford them so much amusement.

Conceive my astonishment and surprise when, after listening for a few minutes, I discovered that the subject which tickled my fellow-prisoners so highly was a description of my own robbery; that is, of the robbery in Glasgow of which I had been the victim.

It was written with considerable humour, and contained such a minute and faithful account of the affair, that I had no doubt it had been written by Lancaster. Indeed it could have been written by no one else.

The letter in question, then, was evidently one from that person to a companion in crime who was amongst those with whom I was associated—no doubt he who was reading it. The writer, however, seemed also well known to all the other parties.

In the letter itself, as well as in the remarks of the audience on it, there was a great deal of slang, and a great many cant phrases which I could not make out. But, on the whole, I obtained a pretty correct knowledge of the import of both.

The writer's description of me and of my worldly wisdom was not very flattering. He spoke of me as a regular flat, and the fleecing me as one of the easiest and pleasantest operations he had ever performed. He concluded by saying that as he found there was nothing worth while to be done in Scotland, he intended returning to London in a few days.

"More fool he," said one of the party, on this passage being read. "That affair at Blackwall, in which Bob was concerned, has not yet blown over, and he'll be lagged, as sure as he lives, before he's a week in London."

"Well, so much the better," said another. "In that case we'll have him across the water with us, and be all the merrier for his company."

It was, I think, somewhat less than a month after this—for we were detained in prison altogether about two months after sentence till a sufficient number had accumulated for transportation—that we, meaning myself and those in the ward in which I was confined, were favoured with a new companion.

Throwing open the door of our ward one afternoon, the turnkey ushered in amongst us a person dressed out in the first style of fashion, and immediately again secured the door. At first I could not believe that so fine a gentleman could possibly be a convict; I thought rather that he must be a friend of some one of my fellow-prisoners. But I was quickly undeceived in this particular, and found that he was indeed one of *us*.

On the entrance of this convict dandy, the whole of my fellow-prisoners rushed towards him, and gave him a cordial greeting.

"Glad to see you, Nick," said the fellow who had foretold the speedy apprehension of the letter-writer, as already related. "Cursed fool to come to London so

soon. Knew you would be nabbed. What have you got?"

"Fourteen," replied the new-comer, with a shrug of his shoulders.

During all this time I had kept my eyes fixed on the stranger, whom I thought I should know. For a while, however, I was greatly puzzled to fix on any individual as identical with him; but at length it struck me that he bore a wonderful resemblance to my Glasgow friend Lancaster.

His appearance was now, indeed, greatly changed. He was, for one thing, splendidly attired, as I have already said, while at the time I had the pleasure of knowing him first he was very indifferently dressed. His face, too, had undergone some alterations. He had removed a bushy pair of whiskers which he sported in Glasgow, and had added to his adventitious characteristics a pair of green spectacles. It was these last that perplexed me most, in endeavouring to make out his identity. But he soon laid them aside, as being now of no further use—an operation which he accompanied by sundry jokes on their utility, and the service they had done him in the way of preventing inconvenient recognitions. Notwithstanding all these changes, however, in the new-comer's appearance, I soon became quite convinced that he was no other than Lancaster; and, under this impression, I took an opportunity of edging towards him, and putting the question plumply to him, although under breath, for I did not care that the rest should hear it.

"Your name, sir, is Lancaster, I think?" said I.

He stared in my face for a second or two without making any reply, or seeming to recognise me. At length—

"No, youngster, it isn't," he said with the most perfect assurance.

"But you have taken that name on an occasion?" said I.

"Oh, perhaps I may," he replied coolly. "I have taken a great many names in my day. I'll give you a hundred of them at a penny a dozen. But, Lancaster, let me see," and he kept looking hard at me as he spoke. "Why, it can't be," he added, with a sudden start. "Impossible! eh?" and he looked still more earnestly at me. "Are you from Glasgow, young un?"

I said I was.

"Did you ever see me there?"

I shook my head, and said, to my cost I had.

How my friend Mr. Lancaster received this intimation of our former acquaintance I must reserve for another number, as I must also do the sequel of my adventures; for I have yet brought the reader but half through the history of my chequered life.

THE CONVICT;

BEING THE SEQUEL TO "DAVID LORIMER."

THE reader will recollect that when he and I parted, at the conclusion of the last number, I had just intimated to Mr. Lancaster my conviction of our having had a previous acquaintance. Does the reader imagine that that gentleman was in any way discomposed at this recognition on my part, or at the way in which it was signified? that he felt ashamed or abashed? The sequel will show whether he did or not.

On my replying to his inquiry whether I had ever seen him in Glasgow, by shaking my head, and saying that I had to my cost, he burst into a loud laugh, and, striking his thigh with as much exultation as if he had just made one of the most amusing discoveries imaginable, exclaimed—

"All right. Here, my pals," turning to the other prisoners. "Here's a queer concern. Isn't this the very flat, Dick," addressing one of their number, "that I did so clean in Glasgow, and about whom I wrote you! The fellow whom I met in the show."

"No! Possible!" exclaimed several voices, whose owners now crowded about me with a delighted curiosity, and began bantering me in those slang terms in which they could best express their witticisms.

I made no reply to either their insolences or their jokes; but, maintaining an obstinate silence, took an early opportunity of withdrawing to a remote part of the apartment. Nor did I—seeing how idle it would

be to say a word more on the subject of the robbery which had been committed on me in Glasgow, as it would only subject me to ridicule and abuse—ever afterwards open my lips to Lancaster on the matter: neither did he to me, and there the affair ended; for, in a few days after, he was removed, for what reason I know not, to another cell, and I never saw him again.

Let me here retrograde for a moment. In alluding, in the preceding number, to the various wild ideas that occurred to me after my condemnation, on the subject of obtaining a reconsideration of my case, I forgot to mention that of applying to the colonel of my regiment; but, on reflection, this seemed as absurd as the others, seeing that I had been little more than three weeks in the corps, and could therefore lay claim to no character at the hands of any one belonging to it. I was still a stranger amongst them. Besides, I found, from no interference whatever having been made in my behalf, that I had been left entirely in the hands of the civil law. Inquiries had no doubt been made into my case by the commanding officer of my regiment, but with myself no direct communication had taken place. My connection with the corps, therefore, I took it for granted, was understood to be completely severed, and that I was left to undergo the punishment the sentence of the civil law had awarded.

To resume. In about a week after the occurrence of the incident with Lancaster above described, I was removed to the hulks, where I remained for somewhat more than a month, when I was put on board a convict ship, about to sail for New South Wales, along with a number of other convicts, male and female; none of them, I hope, so undeserving their fate as I was.

All this time I had submitted patiently to my des-

tiny, seeing it was now inevitable, and said nothing to any one of my innocence; for, in the first place, I found that every one of my companions in misfortune were, according to their own accounts, equally innocent, and, in the next, that nobody believed them.

It was in the evening we were embarked on board the convict ship; with the next tide we dropped down the river; and, ere the sun of the following day had many hours risen, found ourselves fairly at sea.

For upwards of three weeks we pursued our course prosperously, nothing in that time occurring of the smallest consequence; and as the wind had been all along favourable, our progress was so great, that many of us began thinking of the termination of our voyage. These, however, were rather premature reflections, as we had yet as many months to be at sea as we had been weeks.

It was about the end of the period just alluded to, that as I was one night restlessly tossing on my hard straw mattress, unable to sleep, from having fallen into one of those painful and exciting trains of thought that so frequently visit and so greatly add to the miseries of the unfortunate, my ear suddenly caught the sounds of whispering. Diverted from my reflections by the circumstance, I drew towards the edge of my sleeping berth, and thrusting my head a little way out—the place being quite dark—endeavoured, by listening attentively, to make out who the speakers were, and what was the subject of their conversation. The former, after a little time, I discovered to be three of my fellow-convicts—one of them a desperate fellow, of the name of Norcot, a native of Middlesex, who had been transported for a highway robbery, and who had been eminently distinguished for superior dexterity and daring in his infamous profession. The latter,

however—namely, the subject of their conversation—I could not make out; not so much from a difficulty of overhearing what they said, as from the number of slang words they employed. Their language was to me all but wholly unintelligible; for although my undesired association with them had enabled me to pick up a few of their words, I could make nothing of their jargon when spoken colloquially.

Unable, therefore—although suspecting something wrong—to arrive at any conclusion regarding the purpose or object of this midnight conversation, I took no notice of it to any one, but determined on watching narrowly the future proceedings of Norcot and his council.

On the following night the whispering was again repeated. I again listened, but with nearly as little success as before. From what I did make out, however, I was led to imagine that some attempt on the ship was contemplated; and in this idea I was confirmed, when Norcot, on the following day, taking advantage of a time when none of the seamen or soldiers, who formed our guard, were near, slapped me on the shoulder with a—

"Well, my pal, how goes it?"

Surprised at this sudden familiarity on the part of a man from whom I had always most especially kept aloof, and who, I was aware, had marked my shyness, as he had never before sought to exchange words with me, it was some seconds before I could make him any answer. At length—

"If you mean as to my health," said I, "I am very well."

"Ay, ay; but I don't mean that," replied Norcot "How do you like your quarters, my man? How d you like this sort of life, eh?"

"Considering all circumstances, it's well enough; as well as ought reasonably to be expected," said I, in a tone meant to discourage further conversation on the subject. But he was not to be so put off.

"Ay, in the meantime," said he; "but wait you till we get to New South Wales; you'll see a difference then, my man, I'm thinking. You'll be kept working, from sunrise till sunset, up to the middle in mud and water, with a chain about your neck. You'll be locked up in a dungeon at night, fed upon mouldy biscuit, and, on the slightest fault, or without any fault at all, be flogged within an inch of your life with a cat-o'-nine-tails. How will ye like that, eh?"

"*That* I certainly should not like," I replied. "But I hope you're exaggerating a little." I knew he was.

"Not a bit of it," said Norcot. "Come here, Knuckler;" and he motioned to a fellow-convict to come towards him. "I've been telling this young cove here what he may expect when we reach our journey's end, but he won't believe me." Having repeated the description of convict life which he had just given me—

"Now, Knuckler, isn't that the truth?" he said.

"True as gospel," exclaimed Knuckler, with a hideous oath; adding—"Ay, and in some places they are still worse used."

"You hear that?" said Norcot. "I wasn't going to bamboozle you with any nonsense, my lad. We're all in the same lag, you know, and must stick by one another."

My soul revolted at this horrible association, but I took care to conceal my feelings.

Norcot went on:—"Now, seeing what we have to expect when we get to t'other side of the water, wouldn't he be a fool who wouldn't try to escape it if he could, eh? Ay, although at the risk of his life?"

At this moment we were interrupted by a summons to the deck, it being my turn, with that of several others, to enjoy the luxury of inhaling the fresh sea breeze above. Norcot had thus only time to add, as I left him—

"I'll speak to you another time, my cove."

Having now no doubt that some mischief was hatching amongst the convicts, and that the conversation that had just passed was intended at once to sound my disposition and to incline me towards their projects, I felt greatly at a loss what to do. That I should not join in their enterprise, of whatsoever nature it might be, I at once determined. But I felt that this was not enough, and that I was bound to give notice of what I had seen and heard to those in command of the vessel, and that without loss of time, as there was no saying how wild or atrocious might be the scheme of these desperadoes, or how soon they might put it in execution.

Becoming every moment more impressed with the conviction that this was my duty, I separated myself as far as I could from my companions, and, watching an opportunity, said, in a low tone, to the mate of the vessel, whom a chance movement brought close to where I stood—

"Mischief going on. Could I have a moment's private speech of the captain?"

The man stared at me for an instant with a look of non-comprehension, as I thought; and, without saying a word, he then resumed the little piece of duty he had been engaged in when I interrupted him, and immediately after went away, still without speaking, and indeed without taking any further notice of me.

I now thought he had either not understood me, or was not disposed to pay any attention to what I said,

I was mistaken in my conjectures, and in one of them did injustice to his intelligence.

A moment after he left me I saw the captain come out of the cabin, and look hard at me for a second or two. I observed him then despatch the steward towards me. On that person's approach—

"I say, my lad," he exclaimed, so as to be heard by the rest of the convicts on deck, "can you wipe glasses and clean knives, eh? or brush shoes, or anything of that kind?"

Not knowing his real purpose in thus addressing me, I said I had no experience in that sort of employment, but would do the best I could.

"Oh, if you be willing," he said, "we'll soon make you able. I want a hand just now; so come aft with me, and I'll find you work, and show you how to do it too."

I followed him to the cabin; but I had not been there a minute when the captain came down, and, taking me into a state room, said—

"Well, my lad, what's all this? You wanted a private word of me, and hinted to the mate that you knew of some mischief going on amongst the convicts. What is it?"

I told him of the secret whisperings at night I had overheard, and of the discourse Norcot had held with me; mentioning, besides, several expressions which I thought pointed to a secret conspiracy of some kind or other.

The captain was of the same opinion, and after thanking me for my information, and telling me that he would take care that the part I had acted should operate to my advantage on our arrival in the colony, he desired me to take no notice of what had passed, but to mingle with my associates as formerly, and to leave the whole matter to him.

To cover appearances, I was subsequently detained in the steward's room for about a couple of hours, when I was sent back to my former quarters; not, however, without having been well entertained by the steward, by the captain's orders.

What intermediate steps the captain took I do not know, but on that night Norcot and other ten of the most desperate of the convicts were thrown into irons.

Subsequent inquiry discovered a deep-laid plot to surprise the guard, seize their arms, murder the captain and crew and all who resisted, and take possession of the ship.

Whether such a desperate attempt would have been successful or not, is doubtful; but there is no question that a frightful scene of bloodshed would have taken place; nor that, if the ruffians had managed well, and judiciously timed their attack, they had some chance, and probably not a small one, of prevailing.

As it was, however, the matter was knocked on the head; for not only were the leaders of the conspiracy heavily ironed, but they were placed in different parts of the ship, wholly apart, and thus could neither act nor hold the slightest communication with each other.

Although the part I had acted in this affair did not operate in my favour with the greater part of my fellow-convicts,—for, notwithstanding all our caution, a strong suspicion prevailed amongst them that I was the informer,—it secured me the marked favour of all others on board the ship, and procured me many little indulgences which would not otherwise have been permitted, and, generally, much milder treatment than was extended to the others; and I confess I was not without an idea that I deserved it.

On our arrival at Sydney, whither I now hurry the reader, nothing subsequent to the incident just recorded

having occurred in the interval with which I need detain him, I was immediately assigned, with several others, to a farmer, a recently arrived emigrant, who occupied a grant of land of about a thousand acres in the neighbourhood of the town of Maitland.

Before leaving the ship, the captain added to his other kindnesses an assurance that he would not fail to represent my case—meaning with reference to the service I had done him in giving information of the conspiracy amongst the convicts—to the governor, and that he had no doubt of its having a favourable effect on my future fortunes, provided I seconded it by my own good conduct.

The person to whom we had been assigned, an Englishman, being on the spot waiting us, we were forthwith clapped into a covered waggon, and driven off to our destination, our new master following us on horseback.

The work to which we were put on the farm was very laborious, consisting, for several weeks, in clearing the land of trees; felling, burning, and grubbing up the roots. But we were well fed, and, on the whole, kindly treated in other respects; so that, although our toil was severe, we had not much to complain of.

In this situation I remained for a year and a half, and had the gratification of enjoying, during the greater part of that time, the fullest confidence of my employer, whose good opinion I early won by my orderly conduct, and—an unusual thing amongst convicts—by my attention to his interests.

On leaving him, he gave me, unasked, a testimonial of character, written in the strongest terms.

I was now again returned on the hands of Government, to await the demand of some other settler for my services.

In the meantime I had heard nothing of the result of the captain's representation in my behalf to the governor, but had no doubt I would reap the benefit of it on the first occasion that I should have a favour to ask. The first thing in this way that I had to look for was what is called a ticket of leave; that is, a document conferring exemption for a certain period from Government labour, and allowing the party possessing it to employ himself in any lawful way he pleases, and for his own advantage, during the time specified by the ticket. My sentence, however, having been for fourteen years, I could not, in the ordinary case, look for this indulgence till the expiration of six years, such being the colonial regulations.

But imagining the good service I had done in the convict ship would count for something, and probably induce the governor to shorten my term of probation, I began now to think of applying for the indulgence. This idea I shortly after acted upon, and drew up a memorial to the personage just alluded to; saying nothing, however, of my innocence of the crime for which I had been transported, knowing that, as such an assertion would not be believed, it would do much more harm than good. In this memorial, however, I enclosed the letter of recommendation given me by my last master.

It was eight or ten days before I heard anything of my application. At the end of that time, however, I received a very gracious answer. It said that my "praiseworthy conduct" on board the ship in which I came to the colony had been duly reported by the captain, and that it would be remembered to my advantage; that, at the expiry of my second year in the colony, of which there were six months yet to run, a ticket of leave would be granted me—thus abridging

the period by four years; and that, if I continued to behave as well as I had done, I might expect the utmost indulgence that Government could extend to one in my situation.

With this communication, although it did not immediately grant the prayer of my petition, I was much gratified, and prepared to submit cheerfully to the six months' compulsory labour which were yet before me.

Shortly after this I was assigned to another settler, in the neighbourhood of Paramatta. This was a different sort of person from the last I had served, and, I am sorry to say, a countryman. His name I need not give; for although the doing so could no longer affect him, he being long dead, it might give pain to his relatives, several of whom are alive both here and in New South Wales. This man was a tyrant, if ever there was one, and possessed of all the passion and caprice of the worst description of those who delight in lording it over their fellow-creatures. There was not a week that he had not some of my unhappy fellow-servants before a magistrate, often for the most trivial faults—a word, a look—and had them flogged by sentence of the court, by the scourger of the district, till the blood streamed from their backs. Knowing how little consideration there is for the unhappy convict in all cases of difference with his taskmaster, and that however unjust or unreasonable the latter's complaints may be, they are always readily entertained by the subordinate authorities, and carefully recorded against the former to his prejudice, I took care to give him no offence. To say nothing of his positive orders, I obeyed his every slightest wish with a promptitude and alacrity that left him no shadow of ground to complain of me. It was a difficult task; but it being for my interest that no complaint of me, just or unjust, should be put on record

against me, I bore all with what I must call exemplary patience and fortitude.

I have already said that my new master was a man of the most tyrannical disposition—cruel, passionate, and vindictive. He was all this; and his miserable fate—a fate which overtook him while I was in his employment—was, in a great measure, the result of his ungovernable and merciless temper.

Some of the wretched natives of the country—perhaps the most miserable beings on the face of the earth, as they are certainly the lowest in the scale of intellect of all the savage tribes that wander on its surface—used to come occasionally about our farm, in quest of a morsel of food. Amongst these were frequently women with infants on their backs. If my master was out of the way when any of these poor creatures came about the house, his wife, who was a good sort of woman, used to relieve them; and so did we, also, when we had anything in our power. Their treatment, however, was very different when our master happened to be at home. The moment he saw any of these poor blacks approaching, he used to run into the house for his rifle, and on several occasions fired at and wounded the unoffending wretches. At other times he hounded his dogs after them, himself pursuing and hallooing with as much excitement as if he had been engaged in the chase of some wild beasts instead of human beings—beings as distinctly impressed as himself with the image of his God.

It is true that these poor creatures were mischievous sometimes, and that they would readily steal any article to which they took a fancy. But in beings so utterly ignorant, and so destitute of all moral perceptions, such offences could hardly be considered as criminal; not one, at any rate, deserving of wounds and death at the

caprice of a fellow-creature acting on his own impulses, unchecked by any legal or judicial control. Besides, it were easy to prevent the depredations of these poor creatures—easy to drive them off without having recourse to violence.

The humanity and forbearance, however, which such a mode of proceeding with the aborigines would require was not to be found in my master. Fierce repulsion and retaliation were the only means he would have recourse to in his mode of treating them; and the consequence was, his inspiring the natives with a hatred of him, and a desire of vengeance for his manifold cruelties towards them, which was sure, sooner or later, to end in his destruction. It did so. One deed of surpassing cruelty which he perpetrated accomplished his fate.

One day, seeing two or three natives, amongst whom was a woman with a young infant on her back, passing within a short distance of the house, not approaching it—for he was now so much dreaded by these poor creatures that few came to the door—my master, as usual, ran in for his rifle, and calling his dogs around him, gave chase to the party.

The men being unencumbered, fled on seeing him, and being remarkably swift of foot, were soon out of his reach. Not so the poor woman with the child on her back: she could not escape; and at her the savage ruffian fired, killing both her and the infant with the same murderous shot.

This double murder was of so unprovoked, so cold-blooded, and atrocious a nature, that it is probable, little as the life of a native was accounted in those days, that my master would have been called upon to answer for his crime before the tribunals of the colony; but retribution overtook him by another and a speedier course.

On the following day my master came out of the house, about ten o'clock in the forenoon, with an axe in one hand, and the fatal rifle, his constant companion, with which he had perpetrated the atrocious deed on the preceding day, in the other, and coming up to me, told me that he was going to a certain spot in an adjoining wood to cut some timber for paling, and that he desired I should come to him two hours after with one of the cars or sledges in use on the farm, to carry home the cut wood. Having said this, he went off, little dreaming of the fate that awaited him.

At the time appointed I went with a horse and sledge to the wood, but was much surprised to find that my master was not at the spot where he said he would be ;—a surprise which was not a little increased by perceiving, from two or three felled sticks that lay around, that he had been there, but had done little—so little, that he could not have been occupied, as I calculated, for more than a quarter of an hour. Thinking, however, that wherever he had gone he would speedily return, I sat down to await him ; but he came not. An entire hour elapsed, and still he did not make his appearance. Beginning now to suspect that some accident had happened him, I hurried home to inquire if they had seen or heard anything of him there. They had not. His family became much alarmed for his safety—a feeling in which my conscience forbids me to say that I participated.

Two of my fellow-servants now accompanied me back to the wood, which it was proposed we should search. This, so soon as we had reached the spot where my master had appointed to meet me, and where, as already mentioned, he had evidently been, we began to do, whooping and hallooing at the same

time to attract his attention should he be anywhere within hearing.

For a long while our searching and shouting were vain. At length one of my companions, who had entered a tangled patch of underwood which we had not before thought of looking, suddenly uttered a cry of horror. We ran up to him, and found him gazing on the dead body of our master, who lay on his face, transfixed by a native spear, which still stood upright in his back. It was one of those spears which the aborigines of New South Wales use, on occasion, as missiles, and which they throw with an astonishing force and precision.

Such, then, was the end of this cruel man; and that it exceeded his deserts can hardly be maintained.

Luckily for me, my period of service with my late master was at this time about out. A few days more, and I became entitled to my ticket of leave. For this indulgence I applied when the time came, and it was immediately granted me for one year. On obtaining my ticket I proceeded to Sydney, as the most likely place to fall in with some employment. On this subject, however, I felt much at a loss; for not having been bred to any mechanical trade, I could do nothing in that way. Farming was the only business of which I knew anything; and in this, my father having been an excellent farmer, I was pretty well skilled. My hope, therefore, was, that I would find some situation as a farm overseer, and thought Sydney, although a town, the likeliest place to fall in with or hear of an employer. On arriving in Sydney, I proceeded to the house of a countryman of the name of Lawson, who kept a tavern, and to whom I brought a letter of introduction from a relative of his own who had been banished for sedition, and who was one of my fellow-

labourers in the last place where I had served. On reading the letter, Lawson, who was a kind-hearted man, exclaimed—

"Puir Jamie, puir fallow; and hoo is he standin't oot?"

I assured him that he was bearing his fate manfully, but that he had been in the service of a remorseless master.

"Ay, I ken him," said Lawson. "A man that's no gude to his ain canna be gude to ithers."

"You must speak of him now, however, in the past tense," said I. "Mr. —— is dead."

"Dead!" exclaimed Lawson, with much surprise. "When did he die?"

I told him, and also of the manner of his death.

"Weel, that is shockin'," he remarked; "but, upon my word, better couldna hae happened him, for he was a cruel-hearted man." Then, reverting to his relative, "Puir Jamie," he said; "but I think we'll manage to get Jamie oot o' his scrape by-and-by. I hae gude interest wi' the governor, through a certain acquaintance, and houpe to be able to get him a free pardon in a whily. But he maun just submit a wee in the meantime.

"But anent yoursel, my man," continued Lawson, "what can I do for ye? Jamie, here, speaks in the highest terms o' ye, and begs me to do what I can for ye; and that I'll willingly do on his account. What war' ye bred to?"

I told him that I had been bred to the farming business, and that I should like to get employment as a farm overseer or upper servant, to engage for a year.

"Ay, just noo, just noo," said honest Lawson. "Weel, I'll tell you what it is, and it's sae far lucky: there was a decent, respectable-looking man here the

day, a countryman o' our ain—and I believe he'll sleep here the nicht—wha was inquirin' if I kent o' ony decent, steady lad who had been brocht up in the farmin' line. I kenna hoo they ca' the man, but he has been in my house, noo, twa or three times. He's only twa or three months arrived in the colony, and is settled somewhere in the neighbourhood o' Liverpool —our Liverpool, ye ken, no the English Liverpool. He seems to be in respectable circumstances. Noo, if he comes to sleep here the nicht, as I hae nae doot he will, seein' there's nae coach for Liverpool till the morn's mornin'—I'll mention you till him, and maybe ye may mak a bargain."

I thanked Lawson for his kindness, and was about leaving the house, with a promise to call back in the evening, when he stopped me, and insisted on my taking some refreshment. This, which consisted of some cold roast fowl and a glass of brandy and water, I readily accepted. When I had partaken of his hospitality I left the house, repeating my promise to call again in the evening. The interval, knowing nobody in Sydney, I spent in sauntering about the town.

On the approach of evening, I again returned to Lawson's. He was standing in the doorway when I came forward.

"Come awa, lad," he said, with a glad face, on seeing me. "Your frien's here, and I hae been speakin' to him aboot ye, and he seems inclined to treat wi' you. But he's takin' a bit chack o' dinner 'enoo, sae we'll let him alane for twa or three minutes. Stap ye awa in there to the bar, in the meanwhile, and I'll let him ken in a wee that ye're here."

I did so. In about ten minutes after, Lawson came to me, and said the gentleman up stairs would be glad

to see me. I rose and followed him. We entered the room, the worthy landlord leading the way. The stranger, with his elbow resting on the table, was leaning his head thoughtfully on his hand when we entered. He gazed at me for an instant wildly; he sprang from his chair; he clasped me in his arms. I returned the embrace. Reader, it was my own father!

"Davie, my son," he exclaimed, so soon as his surprise and emotion would permit him to speak, "how, in the name of all that's wonderful, has this come about? Where are you from? how came you here? and where on earth have you been all this weary time, since you left us?"

It was several minutes before I could make any reply. At length—

"I have much to tell you, father," I said, glancing at the same time towards Lawson, who stood with open mouth and staring eyes, lost in wonder at the extraordinary scene, which he yet could not fully comprehend.

Understanding, however, the hint conveyed in that look, the worthy man instantly quitted the apartment, leaving us to ourselves. On his doing so, I sat down at table with my father, and related to him the whole history of my misfortunes, without reserve or extenuation.

The narrative grieved and distressed him beyond measure; for, until I told him, he had no idea I stood before him a convicted felon; his first impression naturally being that I had come to the colony of my own free will.

Unlike all others, however, he, my poor father, believed implicitly my assertions of entire innocence of the crime for which I had been transported. But he felt bitterly for the degrading situation in which I stood, and from which neither my own conscious inno-

cence nor his convictions, he was but too sensible, could rescue me in so far as regarded the opinion of the world.

Having told my father my story, he told me his. It was simply this—the story of hundreds, thousands. Tempted by the favourable accounts he had heard and read of Australia, he had come to the resolution of emigrating; had, with this view, sold off at home; and here he was. He added that he had obtained a grant of land, of about 500 acres, in the neighbourhood of Liverpool, on very favourable terms; that although he had not found everything quite so suitable or so well-ordered as he had expected, he had no doubt of being able to do very well when once he should have got matters put in proper train. He said he had already got a very good house erected on the farm, and that although their situation for the first two or three months was bad enough, they were now pretty comfortable; and he hoped that, with my assistance—seeing, as he interpolated with a faint smile, I had just cast up in the nick of time—they would soon make things still better.

"Your poor mother, Davie," continued my father, recurring to a subject which we had already discussed—for my first inquiries had been after that dear parent, who, I was delighted to learn, was in perfect good health, although sunk in spirits in consequence of long mental suffering on my account,—"Your poor mother, Davie," he said, "will go distracted with joy at the sight of you. Her thoughts by day, her dreams by night, have been of you, Davie. But," he added, seeing the tears streaming down my cheeks, "I will not distress you by dwelling on the misery you have occasioned her. It's all over now, I trust, and you will compensate for the past. Neither will I say a word as to the folly of

your conduct in flying your father's house as you did. You have paid dearly for that false step; and God forbid, my son, that I, your father, should add to the punishment. You are, I perceive, too sensible of the folly to render it necessary. So, of that no more."

Of that folly I was indeed sensible—bitterly sensible; and could not listen to the calm, rational, and kind language of my father, without looking back with amazement at the stupidity of my conduct. It now seemed to me to have been the result of utter insanity —madness. I could neither recall nor comprehend the motives and impulses under which I had acted; and could only see the act itself standing forth in naked, inexplicable absurdity. Recurring again to the circumstances which had led to my present unhappy position, and which were always floating uppermost in my father's mind—

"That scoundrel, Digby," he said, "must have been at the bottom of the mischief, Davie. It must have been he who put the spoon into your pocket. What a fiendish contrivance!"

"I have always thought so, father," I replied; "and on my trial ventured to hint it, as I also did to the turnkeys and jailers; but although none said so directly, I saw very clearly that all considered it as a ridiculous invention—a clumsy way of accounting for a very plain fact."

My father now proposed that I should start with him on the following morning, per coach, for Liverpool, from which his farm was distant an easy walk of some six or seven miles. On the following morning, accordingly, after having duly acknowledged our worthy host's kindness, we took our seats on the outside of the coach, and were soon whirling it away merrily toward our destination.

During our journey, it gave both my father and I much painful thought how we should break the matter of my unhappy position to my mother. It would be death to her to learn it. At first we thought of concealing the circumstances altogether; but the chances of her hearing it from others, or making the discovery herself when she was unprepared for it, through a hundred different means, finally determined us on communicating the unpleasant intelligence ourselves; that is, my father undertook the disagreeable task, meaning, however, to choose time and circumstance, and to allow a day or two to elapse before he alluded to it.

Having arrived at Liverpool, we started on foot for my father's farm. Should I attempt it, I would not find it easy to describe what were my feelings at this moment, arising from the prospect of so soon beholding that dear parent, whose image had ever been present to my mind, whose kind tones were ever sounding in my ears like some heart-stirring and well-remembered melody. They were overpowering. But when my father, after we had walked for about an hour, raised his stick, and, pointing to a neat farm-steading on the slope of a hill, and on the skirt of a dense mountain forest that rose high behind it, said, "There's the house, Davie," I thought I should have sunk on the ground. I had never felt so agitated, excepting in that unhappy hour when I stood at the bar of the Old Bailey, and heard sentence of transportation awarded against me. But I compare the feelings on these two occasions only as regards their intensity: in nature they were very different indeed. On the former, they were those of excruciating agony; on the latter, those of excessive joy. As we approached the house, I descried one at the door. It was a female figure. It

was my mother. I gasped for breath. I flew over the ground. I felt it not beneath my feet. I would not be restrained by my father, who kept calling to me. My mother fixed her gaze on me, wondering at my excited manner—wondering who I could be; all unconscious, as I could perceive by her vacant though earnest look, that I was her son—the darling of her heart. But a mother's eye is quick. Another moment, and a shriek of wild joy and surprise announced that I was recognised; in the next, we were in each other's arms, wrapt in a speechless agony of bliss!

My father, whom I had left a long way behind, came up to us while we were locked together in this silent embrace, and stood by us for a few seconds without speaking a word, then passed quietly into the house, leaving us to ourselves.

"My son, my son!" exclaimed my mother, so soon as the fulness of her feelings would allow of utterance, "you have been cruel, cruel to your mother. But I will not upbraid you. In seeing you again—in clasping you once more to my bosom—I am repaid a thousandfold for all you have made me suffer."

With what further passed between us, I need not detain the reader.

The tender expressions of a mother and son meeting under such circumstances as we met, being the language of nature, the embodiment of feelings which all can conceive, there is no occasion for dilating on them in my particular case. I pass on to other things of more general, or at least more uncommon interest.

The first day of my arrival at my father's farm was passed entirely within doors in social communion, and in bringing up that arrear of interchange in thought and feeling which our separation for so long a period had created.

On the following day I commenced work with my father; and although I had done my duty faithfully by both the masters I had served since I came to New South Wales, I soon found the difference between compulsory and voluntary labour.

In the former case I certainly wrought diligently, but as certainly not cheerfully. There was an absence of spirit that quickly gave rise to listlessness and fatigue, and that left the physical energies weak and languid. In the latter case, it was far otherwise. Toil as I might, I felt no diminution of strength. I went from task to task, some of them far harder than any I had yet encountered, with unabated vigour, and accomplished with ease double the work I ever could get through with when in bondage.

The joint labours of my father and myself, assisted occasionally by hired service—for he could not endure the idea of having convicts about him—soon put a new and promising face on the farm.

We cleared, we drained, we enclosed, and we sowed and planted, until we left ourselves comparatively little to do—I mean in the way of hard labour—but to await the returns of our industry.

It was some time after we had got things into this state—that is, I think about three months after I had joined my father—that the latter received intelligence of a band of bushmen or bushrangers having been seen in the neighbourhood. He was assured that they were skulking in the adjoining forest, and that we might every night expect our house to be attacked, robbed, and ourselves, in all probability, murdered.

This information threw us into a most dreadful state of alarm; these bushrangers, as the reader probably knows, being runaway convicts, men of the most desperate characters, who take to the woods, and subsist

by plundering the settlers—a crime to which they do not hesitate to add murder—many instances of fearful atrocities of this kind having occurred.

For some time we were quite at a loss what to do; for although we had firearms and ammunition in the house, there were only four men of us—my father, myself, and two servant lads—while the bushrangers, as we had been told, were at least ten or twelve in number. To have thought then of repelling them by force, was out of the question; it could only have ended in the murder of us all.

Under these circumstances, my father determined on applying to the authorities for constabulary or military protection; and with this view went to Liverpool, where the district magistrate resided.

On stating the case to the latter, he at once gave my father a note to the commanding officer of the garrison, enjoining him to send a small party of military along with him,—these to remain with us for our protection as long as circumstances should render it necessary, and, in the meanwhile, to employ themselves in scouring the adjoining woods, with a view to the apprehension of the bushrangers, and to fire on them without hesitation in all cases where they could not be captured.

The result was, that a party of twelve men, commanded by a sergeant, were immediately turned out, and marched off with my father.

I was sitting on an eminence close by the house, and which commanded a view of the road leading to and from Liverpool, looking out for my father's return, when the party came in sight.

As they neared, I recognised the men, from certain particulars in their uniform, a party of the —th, the regiment into which I had enlisted.

The circumstance excited some curious feelings, and awakened a train of not very pleasing reflections.

I had never dreamt of meeting any of the corps in so distant a part of the world; yet there was nothing more likely or more natural, a large military force being always kept in New South Wales, and frequently changed.

I felt, however, no uneasiness on the subject, thinking that it was not at all probable, seeing the very short time I had been in the regiment, and the constant accession of new men it was receiving, I should be recognised by any of the party.

In the meantime, the party were rapidly approaching me, and were now so near, that I could perceive the sergeant to be a tall and handsome young man of about two or three and twenty. Little did I yet dream who this sergeant was. I descended to meet them. We came up to each other. The sergeant started on seeing me, and looked at me with a grave surprise and fixed gaze. I did precisely the same by him. We advanced towards each other with smiling faces and extended arms. "Lorimer!" exclaimed the sergeant. "Lindsay!" I replied. It was indeed Lindsay, my old comrade, promoted to a sergeantcy.

Our mutual astonishment and satisfaction at this extraordinary and unexpected meeting was, I need not say, very great, although I certainly thought I perceived a certain dryness and want of cordiality in Lindsay's manner towards me. But for this I made every allowance, believing it to proceed from a doubt of my innocence, if not a conviction of my guilt, in the matter for which I had been transported. He in short, it seemed to me, could not forget that, in speaking to me, although an old comrade, he was speaking to a convicted felon. However, notwithstanding this feel-

ing on his part, we talked freely of old stories; and as we were apart from the men, I did not hesitate, amongst other things, to allude to my misfortune, nor to charge the blame of it on Digby.

"Well," said the sergeant, in reply to my remarks on this subject, "since you have mentioned the matter yourself, Lorimer, I am glad to hear you say so—that is, to hear you say that you are innocent of that rascally business; for, putting your assertions, so solemnly made, to what my wife says—for she has some queer stories of that fellow Digby—I have no doubt now of your innocence."

"Your wife!" exclaimed I in some amazement. "In the first place, then, you are married; in the next, how on earth, if I may ask, should she know anything of Digby?"

"Why, man, Susan Blaikie is my wife," replied the sergeant, laughing; "and she's not, I take it, half a dozen miles from us at this moment. I left her safe and sound in my quarters in Liverpool not two hours ago; and right glad will she be to see you, when you can make it convenient to give us a call. But of that we will speak more hereafter."

Like two or three other things recorded in this little history, this information gave me much surprise, but, like few of them, much gratification also; as I had feared the worst for poor Susan, seeing that she had been discharged from her situation, as I had no doubt without a character, probably under a suspicion of being concerned with me in the alleged robbery.

By the time I had expressed the surprise and satisfaction which Sergeant Lindsay's communication had given me, we had reached the house, when all conversation between us of a private nature ceased for the time.

The first business now was to set some refreshment

before the men. This was quickly done; the sergeant, my father, and I taking care of ourselves in a similar way in another apartment. The next was to take the immediate matter in hand into consideration. Accordingly, we three formed ourselves into a council of war, and, after some deliberation, came to the following resolutions:—That we should, soldiers and all, keep closely within doors during the remainder of the afternoon; and that as it was more than probable the bushmen would make their attack that very night, and as it was likely they would know nothing of the military being in the house, seeing that they always kept at a distance during the day, or lay concealed in hidden places, we should take them by surprise; that, for this purpose, we should remain up all night, and place ourselves, with loaded arms, by the windows, and in such other situations as would enable us to see them approaching, without being seen by them.

Having determined on this plan of operations, we resumed our conversation on indifferent matters, and thus spent the time till it was pretty far on in the night, when Lindsay suggested that it was full time the men were distributed in the positions we intended them to occupy. Two were accordingly placed at each window of both the back and front of the house, the sergeant and I occupying one,—he with one of our muskets, and I with a rifle. It was a bright moonlight night; so that, as the vicinity of the house was completely cleared around, to the distance of at least 200 yards on every side, no one could approach it without being seen; although they could remain long enough invisible, and in safety, in the dense wood beyond, and by which the house was surrounded on all sides but one.

The sergeant and I had thus sat for, I think, about an hour and a half, looking intently towards the dark

forest beyond the cleared ground, when we thought we saw several small, dark objects flitting about the skirts of the wood; but whether they were kangaroos or men, we could not tell.

Keeping our eyes fixed steadily on them, however, we by-and-by saw them unite, and could distinctly make out that they were approaching the house in a body. Soon they came sufficiently near to enable us to discern that it was a party of men, to the number of about eight or ten. There might be more, but certainly no fewer. We could now also see that they were armed —at least a part of them—with muskets.

Satisfied that they were the much dreaded bush-rangers, of whose vicinity we had been apprised, the sergeant hastily left the window at which he and I had been seated, and, stealing with soft and cautious steps through the house, visited each of his posts to see that the men were on the alert. To each he whispered instructions to put their pieces on cock, to go down on their knees at the window, and to rest the muzzles of their muskets on the sill, but not project them out more than two or three inches. He concluded by telling them not to fire a shot until they heard the report of his musket; that then they were to pepper away as hard as they could pelt, taking, however, a sure and steady aim at every shot.

In the meantime the bushmen, whose advance had been, and still was, very slow and cautious, as if they dreaded an ambuscade, had approached to within seventy yards of the house. Thinking them yet too distant to make sure of them, we allowed them to come nearer. They did so; but they had now assumed a stealthy step, walking lightly, as if they feared that their footfalls should be heard. They were led on by one of their number; at least there was one man con-

siderably in advance of his fellows. He was armed with a sword, as we saw it flashing in the moonlight.

The party, handling their guns in readiness to fire, on the slightest alarm, at any living object that might present itself, were now within thirty or forty yards of the house, and had halted to reconnoitre; when the sergeant, who had been on his knees for several minutes before, with his piece at his eye, said softly, "Now," and fired. Whether he had aimed at the foremost man of the gang, I do not know; but if so, he had missed him, for he still stood firm. At this person, however, I now levelled, fired, and down he came. In the next instant the shots were rapping thick and fast from the different windows of the house.

The bushrangers, taken by surprise, paused for an instant, returned two or three straggling shots, and then fled in the utmost consternation and disorder. We kept pelting after them for a few minutes, and then, quitting the house, gave them chase, with a whooping and hallooing that must have added in no small degree to their terror. In this chase we overtook two that had been severely wounded, and came upon a third near the skirt of the wood, who, after running so far, had dropped down dead. The others, who had fled, some of whom, we had no doubt, were also wounded, escaped by getting into the forest, where it was no use looking for them. The two wounded men we made prisoners, and carried back to the house. As we were returning, we came upon the man whom I had brought down. Being extended motionless on the ground at full length, we thought him dead, and were about to pass on, intending to leave him where he lay till the morning, when I thought I heard him breathing. I knelt down beside him, looked narrowly into his face, and found that he

was still living. On discovering this, we had the unfortunate man carried to the house; and having placed him on a mattress, staunched the bleeding of his wound, which was on the right breast, and administered a little brandy and water, which almost immediately revived him. He opened his eyes, began to breathe more freely, and in a short time was so far recovered as to be able to speak, although with difficulty.

The excitement of the fray over, if the late affair could be so called, my heart bled within me for the unhappy wretch who had been reduced by my hand to the deplorable condition in which he now lay before me. My conscience rose up against me, and would not be laid by any suggestions of the necessity that prompted the deed. In my anxiety to make what reparation I could for what now seemed to me my cruelty, I sat by the miserable sufferer, ready and eager to supply any want he might express, and to administer what comfort I could do him in his dying moments; for that he was dying, notwithstanding the temporary revival alluded to, was but too evident from his ghastly look and rapidly glazing eye.

It was while I thus sat by the unhappy man, and while silently contemplating his pallid countenance, by the faint light of a lamp that hung against the wall of the apartment, that I suddenly thought I perceived in that countenance some traces of features that I had seen before. Whose they were, or where I had seen them, I did not at first recollect. But the idea having once presented itself, I kept hunting it through all the recesses of my memory. At length Digby occurred to me. But no, Digby it could not be. Impossible.

I looked on the countenance of the sufferer again. It was slightly distorted with pain, and all trace of the resemblance I had fancied was gone. An interval of ease succeeded. The real or imagined resemblance

returned. Again I lost sight of it, and again I caught it; for it was only in some points of view I could detect it at all. At length, after marking for some time longer, with intense interest, the features of the sufferer, my conviction becoming every moment stronger and stronger, and my agitation in consequence extreme, I bent my head close to the dying man, and, taking his cold and clammy hand in mine, asked him, in a whisper, if his name was not Digby. His eyes were closed at the moment, but I saw he was not sleeping. On my putting the question, he opened them wide, and stared wildly upon me, but without saying a word. He seemed to be endeavouring to recognise me, but apparently in vain. I repeated the question. This time he answered. Still gazing earnestly at me, he said, and it was all he did say, "It is."

"Don't you know me?" I inquired.

He shook his head.

"My name is Lorimer," said I.

"Thank God," he exclaimed solemnly. "For one, at least, of my crimes it is permitted me to make some reparation. Haste, haste, get witnesses and hear my dying declaration. There's no time to lose, for I feel I am fast going!"

Without a moment's delay—for I felt the importance of obtaining the declaration, which I had no doubt would establish my innocence—I ran for my father and Sergeant Lindsay, and, to make assurance doubly sure, brought two of the privates also along with me. It was a striking scene of retributive justice.

On our entering the apartment where Digby lay, the wretched man raised himself upon his elbow. I ran and placed two pillows beneath him to support him. He thanked me. Then raising his hand impressively, and directing it towards me—

"That young man there," he said, "David Lorimer, is, as I declare on the word of a dying man, innocent of the crime for which he was banished to this country. I, and no other, am the guilty person. It was I who robbed my master, Mr. Wallscourt, of the silver plate for which this young man was blamed; and it was I who put the silver spoon in his pocket, in order to substantiate the charge I subsequently brought against him, and in which I was but too successful."

He then added, that in case his declaration should not be deemed sufficient to clear me of the guilt imputed to me, we should endeavour to find out a person of the name of Nareby—Thomas Nareby—who, he said, was in the colony under sentence of transportation for life for housebreaking; and that this person, who had been, at the time of the robbery for which I suffered, a receiver of stolen goods, and with whom he, Digby, had deposited Mr. Wallscourt's plate, would acknowledge—at least he hoped so—this transaction, and thus add to the weight of his dying testimony to my innocence.

Digby having concluded, I immediately committed what he had just said to writing, and having read it over to him, obtained his approval of it. He then, of his own accord, offered to subscribe the declaration, and with some difficulty accomplished the task. The signature was hardly legible, but it was quite sufficient when attested, as it was, by the signatures of all present excepting myself. Exhausted with the effort he had made, Digby now sank back on his pillow, and in less than three minutes after expired.

We now learned from the unhappy man's two wounded companions, who, the reader will recollect, were our prisoners, that, soon after my trial and condemnation, he, Digby, had left Mr. Wallscourt's service, not under any suspicion of the robbery of the plate, but

with no very good general character; that he had then betaken himself entirely to live with the abandoned characters whose acquaintance he had formed, and to subsist by swindling and robbery; that he had proceeded from crime to crime, until he at length fell into the hands of justice; and his banishment to the colony, where he had arrived about six months before, was the result; that he had not been more than a month in the country when he and several other convicts ran away from the master to whom they had been assigned, and took to the bush. Such was the brief but dismal history of this wretched man.

On the following day we buried his remains in a lonely spot in the forest, at the distance of about half a mile from the house, and thereafter proceeded with our prisoners to Liverpool. On arriving there, I accompanied my father to the magistrate on whom he had waited on a former occasion, and having stated to that gentleman the extraordinary circumstance which had taken place—meaning Digby's declaration—he advised an immediate application to the governor, setting forth the circumstances of the case. This I lost no time in doing, enclosing within my memorial Digby's attested declaration, and pointing out Nareby as a person likely to confirm its tenor. The singularity and apparent hardship of the case, combined with the favourable knowledge of me previously existing, attracted the attention of the governor in a special manner, and excited in him so lively an interest, that he instantly had Nareby subjected to a judicial examination, the result of which was a full admission on the part of that person of the transaction to which Digby alluded.

Satisfied now of my innocence, and of the injustice which had been unwittingly done me, the governor not only immediately transmitted me a full and free pardon,

but offered me, by way of compensation, a lucrative Government appointment. This appointment I accepted, and held for thirty years, I trust with credit to myself, and satisfaction to my superiors. At the end of this period, feeling my health giving way, my father and mother having both, in the meantime, died, and having in that time scraped together a competency, I returned to my native land, and have written these little memoirs in one of the pleasantest little retirements on the banks of the Tweed.

I have only now to add, that I had frequent opportunities of seeing both Lindsay and his wife after the establishment of my innocence, and that no persons could more sincerely rejoice in that event than they did. My poor mother, whom my father had made aware of my situation soon after my arrival, and who had borne the intelligence much better than we expected, it put nearly distracted with joy.

"My puir laddie," she exclaimed, "*I* aye kent to be innocent. But noo the world 'll ken it too, and I can die happy."

THE AMATEUR ROBBERY.

If there is anything more than another of which civilisation has reason to be proud, it is the amelioration that has been effected in punishment for crimes. Nor is it yet very long since we began to get quit of the shame of our folly and inhumanity, if we have not traces of these yet, coming out like sympathetic ink dried by the choler of self-perfection and a false philosophy, as in such writings as the latter-day pamphlets. How a man who loves his species, and has a heart, will hang his head abashed as he turns his vision back no further than the sixteenth century, and sees the writhing creatures — often aged unhappy women — under the pilniewinkies, caschielaws, turkases, thumbikens, and other instruments of torture, frantically bursting out with the demanded confession that was to fit them for the stake or the rope! And even after these things in the curiosity shop of Nemesis were got rid of, the abettors of the law rushed with full swing into the operation of hanging, scarcely allowing a crime to escape, from cold-blooded murder down to the act of the famished wretch who snatched a roll from a baker's basket. However insensible these strange lawgivers may have been to so much cruelty, however blind to the perversity, prejudices, and weaknesses incident to human testimony, however ignorant of the total inefficacy of their remedy to deter from crime, one might have imagined that they could not but have known, if they ever looked inwardly into their own hearts, how obscure are human motives, and especially

those that instigate to breaches of the law; and yet their consistent rule was, to make the *corpus delicti* prove the intention. These considerations have been suggested to me by the recollection of a wild adventure of some young men in Edinburgh, the circumstances of which, not belonging to fiction, will show better than a learned dissertation how easy it was for these Dracos to catch the fact and miss the motive.

The skeleton names—now, alas! the only representatives of skeleton bodies—Andrew W—pe, Henry S—k, and Charles S—th, may recall to the memory of some people in Edinburgh still, three young men, who, with good education, fair talents, and graces from nature, might have played a respectable *rôle* in the drama of life, had it not been for a tendency to "fastness," a disease which seems to increase with civilisation. In their instance the old adage of Aristotle, *simile gaudet simili*, was exemplified to the letter; and the union confirmed in each a mind which, originally impatient of authority, fretted itself against the frame of society, simply because that frame was the result of order. They were never happy except when they went up to the palisades, struck upon them with their lath-blades, and when some orderly indweller looked over atop, ran away laughing. No doubt they had strong passions to gratify too; but, as is usual with this peculiar race of beings, the gratification was the keener the more it owed to a rebellion against decorum. If they ever differed, it was only in their rivalry of success; or when they did not go a spree-hunting together, they recounted their exploits at their nightly meetings, and then the result was an increase of moral inflammation.

Sometimes, for a change, they would take strolls into the country, where they could extract as tribute the admiration or wrath of clodhoppers without being

troubled with any fears of the police; not that on any of these occasions they perpetrated any great infringements on the law, for, like the rest of their kind, if they could make themselves objects of observation, they were regardless whether their bizarreries were paid with admiration or only anger or fear, though, if they could produce by any means a causeless panic, the very height of their ambition was attained. In regard to this last effect of their escapades, they were, in the instance I am about to record, more than satisfied. They had gone, on a fine, clear, winter day, along the coast of the Firth of Forth towards Cramond; and, to diversify their amusements, they took with them a gun, which was carried by S—th, with the intention of having a shot at any wild bird or barn-door fowl that might come conveniently within his range. Of this kind of game they had fewer chances, and the stroll would doubtless have appeared a very monotonous affair to a person fond of rational conversation. Nor was there much even to themselves of diversification till they got into a small change-house at Davidson's Mains, where, with a rampant authority, they contrived to get served up to them a kind of dinner, intending to make up for the want of better edibles by potations of whisky toddy.

If facts, as Quinctilian says, are the bones of conversation, opinions are certainly its sinews; and we might add, that whisky toddy is its nervous fluid. These youths, though unwilling to acquire solid information, could wrangle even to quarrelling; but such were their affinities, that they adhered again in a short time, and were as firm friends as ever. They had raised a subject—no other than the question whether highwaymen are necessarily or generally possessed of true courage. Very absurd, no doubt, but as good for a wrangle as

any other that can be divided into affirmative and negative by the refracting medium of feeling or prejudice. S—th declared them all to be cowards.

"What say you to Cartouche?" said S—k; "was he a coward?"

"Not sure but he was," said S—th; "he kept a band of blackguards and received their pay, but he was seldom seen in the wild *mélee* himself. He was fond of the name of terror he bore; but then, as he listened to the wonderful things the Parisian *blanchisseuses* and *chiffonniers* and *gamins* said of him, he knew he was not recognisable, for the very reason that he kept out of sight."

"Oh yes," said W—pe, who joined S—k; "and so he was like Wallace, who kept out of the sight of the English, and yet delighted in Dundee to hear himself spoken of by the crowds who collected in these troublesome times to discuss public affairs. S—th, you know Wallace was a coward, don't you?"

"A thorough poltroon," cried S—th, laughing; "ay, and all the people in Scotland are wrong about him. Didn't he run off, after stabbing the governor's son? and he was always skulking about the Cartland Crags. Then, didn't he flee at the battle of Falkirk; and was he not a robber when Scotland belonged to Longshanks? No doubt the fellow had a big body, strong bones, and good thews; but that he had the real pluck that nerved the little bodies of such men as Nelson, or Suwarrow, ay, or of Napoleon, I deny." Then he began a ludicrous singing, see-saw recitation of the English doggrel—

"The noble wight,
The Wallace dight,
Who slew the knight
On Beltane night,

And ran for fright
Of English might,
And English fight,
And English right ;"

and so on in drunken ribaldry.

"All very well for you who are a Shamite, Shmite, Shmith, Smith," said W—pe. "We happen to be Japhetites. Then what say you to Rob Roy?"

"That, in the first place," replied S—th, "he was a Shemite; for Gathelus, the first Scottish monarch, was a grandson of Nimrod, and, what is worse, he married Scota, the daughter of an Egyptian queen, so there was a spice of Ham in Rob; and as all the Hamites were robbers, Rob was a robber too;—as to whose cowardice there is no doubt whatever; for a man who steals another man's cattle in the dark must be a coward. Did you ever hear one single example of Rob attacking when in good daylight, and fighting for them in the sun?"

"Ingenious, S—th, at any rate," roared S—k; "but I don't agree with you. A robber on the highway, must, in the general case, have courage. He braves public opinion, he laughs at the gallows, and he throws himself right against a man in bold competition, without knowing often whether he is a giant or a dwarf."

"All the elements of a batter pudding," cried S—th, "without the battering principle. Ay, you forget the head-battering bludgeon, the instantaneous pistol, or the cunning knife; none of all which would a man with a spark of courage in him use against an unarmed, defenceless traveller. Another thing you forget, the robber acts upon surprises. He produces confusion by his very presentation, fear by his demand of life or money; and when the poor devil's head is

running round, he runs away with his watch or his purse, perhaps both. 'Tis all selfishness, pure unadulterated selfishness; and will you tell me that a man without a particle of honesty or generosity can have courage?"

"Not moral courage, perhaps; but he may have physical."

"All the same, no difference," continued the doughty S—th. "Who ever heard of a bodily feeling except as something coming through the body? There are only two physical feelings: pain in being wounded or starved, and pleasure in being relieved from pain, or fed when hungry or thirsty. I know none other; all the others are moral feelings."

"You may be bold through drink acting on the stomach and head."

"Ay, but the boldness, though the effect of a physical cause, is itself a moral entity."

"Whoever thought that S—th was such a metaphysician!" said W—pe, a little agoggled in his drunken eyes.

"But the same may be said of every feeling," rejoined S—k, somewhat roused to ambition by W—pe's remark.

"And so it may, my little Aristotle," continued the clever asserter of his original proposition. "Why, man, look ye, what takes you into Miss F—'s shop in Princes Street for snuff, when you never produce a physical titillation in your nose by a single pinch? Why, it's something you call love, a terribly moral thing, though personified by a little fellow with pinions. Yes, wondrously moral; and sometimes, as in your case, immoral. Well, what is it produced by? The face of the said Miss F—— painted as a sun picture in the camera at the back of your eye, where there is a membrane without a particle of nitrate of silver in its com-

position, and which yet receives the image. Well, what is love but just the titillation produced by this image imprinted on your flesh, just as the pleasure of a pinch is the effect of a titillation of the nerves in the nose? Yet we don't say that snuff pleasure is a moral thing, but merely nasal or bodily. What makes the difference?"

"How S—th is coming it!" said W—pe, still more amazed. "Where the devil has he got all this?"

"Why, the difference lies here. You know, by manipulation and blowing it, that you have a nose; but you don't wipe the retina at the back of your eye when you are weeping for love—only the outside, where the puling tears are. In short, you know you have a nose, but you don't know you have a retina. D'ye catch me, my small Stagyrite, my petit Peripatetic, my conical Academician, eh? Take your toddy, and let's have a touch of moral drunkenness."

"You ray-ther have me on the hip, S—th."

"Ay, just so; and if I should kick you there, you would not say the pain was a moral thing. All through the same. It's just where and when we don't know the medium we say things are moral and spiritual, and poetical and rational, and all the rest of the humbug."

"But though you say all highwaymen are cowards, you won't try that trick with your foot," said S—k, boiling up a little under the fire of the toddy.

"Don't intend; though, if you were to produce moral courage in me by pinching my nose, I think I could, after making up my mind and putting you upon your guard with a stick in your hand if you chose. Eh! my Peripatetic." And S—th was clearly getting drunk too.

"D—n the fellow, his metaphysics are making him impudent," cried W—pe.

"Why, you don't see where they hit," said S—th drawlingly. "Somewhere about the pineal; and therefore we say impudence is moral, sometimes immoral, as just now when you damned me. No more of your old junk, I say, sitting here in my cathedra, which by the way is spring-bottomed, which may account for my moral elasticity that a highwayman is a coward."

"Well," cried S—k, starting up. "I'll deposit a pound with W—pe, on a bet that you'll not take sixpence from the first bumpkin we meet on the road, by the old watchword, 'Stand and deliver;' and you'll have the gun to boot."

"Ay, that's a physical bribe," cried W—pe; and, after pausing a little, "The fellow flinches."

"And surely the reverse must hold," added S—k, "that, being a coward, he must be a highwayman."

"Why, you see, gents," said S—th coolly, "I don't mind a very great deal, you know, though I do take said sixpence from said bumpkin; but I won't do it, you know, on compulsion."

"If there's no compulsion, there's no robbery," said S—k.

"Oh, I mean *your* compulsion. As for mine, exercised on said bumpkin, let me alone for that part of the small affair; but none of your compulsion, if you love me. I can do anything, but not upon compulsion, you know."

"Done then!"

"Why, ye-e-s," drawled S—th, "done; I may say, gents, done; but I say with Sir John, don't misunderstand me, not upon compulsion, you know."

"Your own free will," shouted both the others, now pretty well to do in the world of dithyrambics. "Here's your instrument for extorting the sixpence by force or fear."

And this young man, half inebriated—with, we may here say parenthetically, a mother living in a garret in James' Square, with one son and an only daughter of a respectable though poor man, and who trusted to her son for being the means of her support—qualified, as we have seen, by high parts to extort from society respect, and we may add, though that has not appeared, to conciliate love and admiration—took willingly intc his hand the old rusty "Innes," to perpetrate upon the highway a robbery. And would he do it? You had only to look upon his face for an instant to be certain that he would; for he had all the lineaments of a young man of indomitable courage and resolution—the steady eye, the firm lip, all under the high brows of intellect, nor unmixed with the beauty that belongs to these moral expressions which in the playfulness of the social hour he had been reducing to materialism, well knowing all the while that he was arguing for effect and applause from those who only gave him the return of stultified petulance. What if that mother and sister, who loved him, and wept day and night over the wild follies that consumed his energies and demoralized his heart, had seen him now!

The bill was paid by S—k, who happened to have money, and who gave it on the implied condition of a similar one for all on another occasion. They went, or, as the phrase is often, sallied forth. The night had now come down with her black shadows. There was no moon. She was dispensing her favours among savages in another hemisphere, who, savages though they were, might have their devotions to their strange gods, resident with her up yonder, where no robbery is, save that of light from the pure fountain of heat and life. Yes, the darkness was auspicious to folly, as it often is to vice; and there was quietness too—no winds abroad to

burgh.

Now, S——th;

And fumbling nervously in his pocket, and shaking all over, not at all like the old object of similitude, but rather like a branch of a tree driven by the wind, he thrust something into S—th's hand, and rushing past him, was off on the road homewards. Nor was it a quick walk under fear, but a run, as if he thought he was or would be pursued for his life, or brought down by the long range of the gun he had seen in the hands of the robber.

Yes, it was easily done, and it was done; but how to be undone at a time when the craving maw of the noose dangled from the post, in obedience to the Procrustes of the time!

And S—th felt it was done. His hand still held what the man had pushed into it, but by-and-by it was as fire. His brain reeled; he staggered, and would have fallen, but for S—k, who, leaping the dyke, came behind him.

"What luck?"

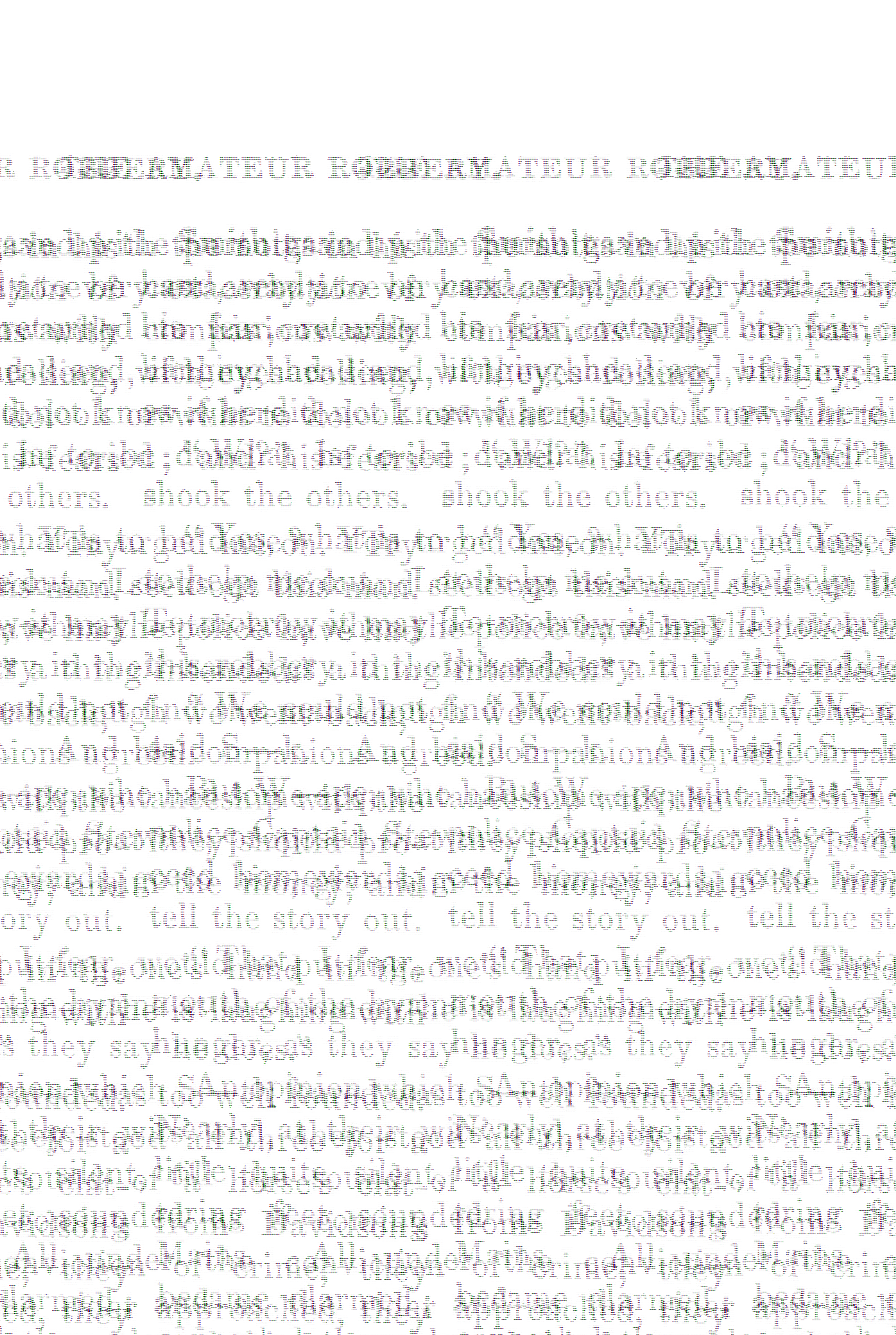
"This," said S—th,—"the price of my life," throwing on the ground the paper roll.

"Pound-notes," cried S—k, taking them up. "One, two, three, four, five; more than sixpence."

"Where is the man?" cried S—th, as, seizing the notes from the hands of S—k, he turned round. Then, throwing down the gun, he set off after his victim; but the latter was now ahead, though his pursuer heard the clatter of his heavy shoes on the metal road.

"Ho, there! stop! 'twas a joke—a bet."

No answer, and couldn't be. The man naturally thought the halloo was for further compulsion, under the idea that he had more to give, and on he sped with increased celerity and terror; nor is it supposed that he stopt till he got to his own house, a mile beyond Davidson's Mains.



were past; and S—th, releaping the dyke, was again upon the road in the depth of despair, and his companions scarcely less so. All his and their escapades had hitherto been at least within the bounds of the law; and though his heart had often misgiven him, when called upon for the nourishment of his wild humours, as he thought of his widowed mother at home, without the comfort of the son she loved in spite of his errors, he had not ever yet felt the pangs of deep regret as they came preluding amendment. A terrible influx of feelings, which had been accumulating almost unknown to him during months and months—for his father had been dead only for a year and a half—pushed up against all the strainings of a wild natural temperament, and seemed ready to choke him, depriving him of utterance, and making him appear the very coward he had been depicting so sharply an hour before. A deep gloom fell over him; nor was this rendered less inspissated by the recollection that came quick as lightning, that he was the only one known to the mistress of the inn. And now, worse and worse—for the same power that sent him that conviction threw a suspicion over his mind which made him strike his forehead with an energy alarming to his companions—no other—"O, merciful God!" he muttered—than that the man he had robbed was his maternal uncle; the only man among the friends of either his father or his mother who had shown any sympathy to the bereaved family, who had fed them and kept them from starvation, and by whom he had been himself nourished. He had no power to speak this: it was one of those thoughts that scathe the nerves that serve the tongue, and which flit and burn, and will not ameliorate their fierceness by the common means given to man in mercy. It now appeared to him as something miraculous why he did not recognise

him; but the occasion was one of hurry and confusion, and so completely oblivious had he been in the agony which came on him in an instant, that he even thought that at the very moment he knew him, looking darkly, as he did, through the handkerchief over his eyes. In his despair, he meditated hurrying to Leith, and with the five pounds getting a passage over the sea somewhere, it signified nothing where, if away from the scene of his crime and ingratitude; and this resolution was confirmed by the additional thought that Mr. Henderson, however good and generous, was a stern man —so stern, that he had ten years before given up a beloved son into the hands of justice for stealing; yea, stern *ex corde* as Cato, if generous *ex crumena* as Codrus.

This resolution for a time brought back his love of freedom and adventure. He would go to Hudson's Bay, and shoot bears or set traps for wild silver-foxes, that would bring him gold; or to Buenos Ayres, and catch the wild horse with the lasso; or to Lima, and become a soldier of fortune, and slay men with the sword. The gleam of wild hope was shortlived—his triumph over his present ill a temporary hallucination. The laurel is the only tree which burns and crackles when green. The intention fled, as once more the thought of his mother came, with that vigour which was only of half an hour's birth, and begotten by young conscience on old neglect. They had been trailing their legs along till they came to Inverleith Row, where he behoved to have left his companions, if his resolution lasted; for the road there goes straight on to Leith Harbour. He hesitated, and made an effort; but S—k, who knew him, and fancied from the wild look of his eye that he meditated throwing himself into the deep harbour of Leith, took him by an arm, motioning to W—pe to take the other, and thus by a

very small effort—for really his resolution had departed, and his mind, so far as his intention went, was gone—they half forced him up the long row. When they arrived at Canonmills, here is the rider again, hurrying on: he had executed his commission, whatever it was, and was galloping home. But the moment he came forward, he pulled up. He had, by a glance under the light of a lamp, caught a sight of the gun in the hands of S—k, who had carried it when he took S—th's arm. The man shouted to a policeman,

"Seize that robber!"

"Which of them?"

"Him with the gun."

And in an instant the cowardly dog who had done the whole business was laid hold of.

"The gun is mine," cried S—th. "It is I who am answerable for whatever was done by him who carried that weapon. Take me, and let the innocent off. I say this young man is innocent."

"Very gallant and noble," said the man; "but when we go to the hills, we like the deer that bears the horns."

"We are up to them tricks," said the policeman. And S—k is borne along, with courage, if he ever had any, gone, and his eye looking terror.

S—th wanted to go along with him; but W—pe seized him by the arm again and dragged him up by the east side of Huntly Street, whereby they could get easily to James' Square.

In a few minutes more S—th was at his mother's door with the burning five pounds in his pocket. He had meditated throwing it away, but the hurrying concourse of thoughts had prevented the insufficient remedy from being carried into effect. When he opened the door he found his mother alone. The sister had not yet come from the warehouse where she earned five

shillings a week, almost the only source of her and the mother's living; for the money which S—th earned as a mere copying clerk in a writer's office, went mostly in some other direction. The mother soon observed, as she cast her eye over him, that there was something more than ordinary out of even his irregular way. He was pale, woe-worn, haggard; nor did he seem able to stand, but hurried to a chair and flung himself down, uttering confusedly, "Something to drink, mother—whisky."

"I hae nane, Charlie, lad," said she. "Never hae I passed a day like this since your father died. I have na e'en got the bit meat that a' get that are under God's protection. But what ails ye, dear Charlie?"

"Never mind me," replied the youth in choking accents. "I am better. Starving, starving! O God! and my doing. Yes, I am better—a bitter cure—starving," he again muttered; and searching his pockets, and throwing the five pounds on the table—"There, there, there," he added.

The mother took up the notes, and counted them slowly; for she had been inured to grief, and was always calm, even when her heart beat fast with the throbs of anguish.

"And whaur fae, laddie?" she said, as she turned her grey eye and scanned deeply the pale face of her son.

Silent, even dogged! Where now his metaphysics, his gibes on the physicalities, the moralities, the spiritualities?—all bundled up in a vibrating chord.

"Whaur fae, Charlie," had she repeated, still looking at him.

"The devil!" cried he, stung by her searching look, which brought back a gleam of the old rebellion.

"A gude paymaster to his servants," she said; "but

I'm no ane o' them yet; and may the Lord, wham I serve, even while his chastening hand is heavy upon me, preserve me frae his bribes!" And laying down the notes, she added, not lightly, as it might seem, but seriously, yet quietly,

"Nae wonder they're warm."

The notes had carried the heat of his burning hand.

"The auld story—billiards," said she again; "for they are the devil's cue and balls."

No answer; and the mother seating herself again, looked stedfastly and suspiciously at him; but she could not catch the eye of her son, who sat doggedly determined not to reveal his secret, and as determined also to elude her looks, searching as they were, and sufficient to enter his very soul. Yet she loved him too well to objurgate where she was only as yet suspicious; and in the quietness of the hour, she fell for a moment into her widowed habit of speaking as if none were present but herself.

"Wharfor bore I him—wharfor toiled and wrought for him for sae mony years, since the time he sat on my knee smiling in my face, as if he said, I will comfort you when you are old, and will be your stay and support? Was that smile then a lee, put there by the devil, wha has gi'en him the money to deceive me again?"

Then she paused.

"And how could that be? Love is not a cheat; and did ever bairn love a mither as he loved me? or did ever mither love her bairn as I hae loved him? Lord, deliver him frae his enemies, and mak him what he was in thae bygone days—sae innocent, sae cheerful, sae obedient; and I will meekly suffer a' Thou canst lay upon me."

The words reached the ears of the son, and the

audible sobs seemed to startle the solemn spirit of the hour and the place. "What would she say," he thought, "if she heard me declare I had robbed my uncle?"

At that moment the door opened, and in rushed little Jeanie S—th,—her face pale, and her blue eyes lighted with fear, and the thin delicate nostril distended, and hissing with her quick breathings,—

"Oh mither, there's twa officers on the stair seeking Charlie!"

And the quick creature, darting her eye on the table where the notes lay, snatched them up, and secreted them in her bosom; and, what was more extraordinary, just as if she had divined something more from her brother's looks, which told her that that money would be sought for by these officers, she darted off like a bird with a crumb in its bill, which it has picked up from beneath your eyes; but not before depositing, as she passed, a paper on a chair near the door.

"That creature is a spirit," said the mother. "She sees the evil in the dark before it comes, and wards it off like a guardian angel; but oh! she has little in her power to be an angel."

And rising, she took up the paper. It was only some bread and cheese, which the girl, knowing the privations of her mother, had bought with a part of her five shillings a week.

Thereafter, just as little Jeannie had intimated, came in two officers, with the usual looks of duty appearing through their professional sorrow.

"We want your son, good woman."

"He is there," said she; "but what want ye him for?"

"Not for going to church," said the man, forgetting

said professional sorrow in his love of a joke, "but for robbery on the highway; and we must search the house for five pounds in British Linen Company notes."

And the men proceeded to search, even putting their hands in the mother's pockets, besides rifling those of the son. They of course found nothing except the powder and shot, which had still remained there, and a handkerchief.

"That is something, anyhow," said one of the men, "and a great deal too. The one who is up in the office says true; he was not the man."

"No more he was," said Charles. "I am the man you ought to take; and take me."

"Sae, sae; just as I suspected," muttered the mother. "Lord, Lord! the cup runs over. It was e'en lipping when John died; but I will bear yet." And she seemed to grasp firmly the back of a chair, and compressed her lips—an attitude she maintained like a statue all the time occupied by the departure of her son. The door closed—he was gone; and she still stood, the *vivum cadaver*—the image of a petrified creature of misery.

Yet, overcome as her very calmness was, and enchanted for the moment into voicelessness and utter inaction, she was not that kind of women who sit and bear the stripes without an effort to ward them off. If Jeannie was as quick as lightning, she was sure as that which follows the flash. She thought for a moment, "God does not absolutely and for ever leave his servants." Some thought had struck her. She put on her bonnet and cloak deliberately, even looking into the glass to see if she was tidy enough for where she intended going, and for whom she intended to see.

And now this quiet woman is on her way down Broughton Street at twelve o'clock of a cold winter night, which, like her own mind, had only that calm-

ness which results from the exhaustion of sudden biting gusts from the north, and therefore right in her face. She drew her cloak round her. She had a long way to go, but her son was in danger of the gallows; and thoughtless, and as it now seemed, wicked as he was, he was yet her *son*. The very word is a volume of heart language—not the fitful expression of passion, but that quiet eloquence which bedews the eye and brings deep sighs with holy recollections of the child-time, and germinating hopes of future happiness up to the period when he would hang over her departing spirit. Much of all that had gone, and been replaced by dark forebodings of the future; and now there was before her the vision of an ignominious death as the termination of all these holy inspirations. But her faithful saying was always, "Wait, hope, and persevere;" and the saying was muttered a hundred times as she trudged weariedly, oh! how weariedly, for one who had scarcely tasted food for that day, and who had left untouched the gift brought by her loving daughter that night—for which, plain as it was, her heart yearned even amidst its grief, yea, though grief is said, untruly no doubt, to have no appetite. Perhaps not to those who are well fed; but nature is stronger than even grief, and she now felt the consequence of her disobedience to her behests in her shaking limbs and fainting heart. Yet she trudged and trudged on, shutting her mouth against her empty stomach to keep out the cold north wind. She is at the foot of Inverleith Row, and her face is to the west; she will now escape the desultory blasts by keeping close by the long running dyke. She passes the scene of the robbery without knowing it; else, doubtless, she would have stood and examined it by those instincts that force the spirit to such modes of satisfaction, as if the inanimate

thing could calm the spiritual. She was now drawing to Davidson's Mains: a little longer, and much past midnight, she was rapping, still in her quiet way, at the door of her brother.

The family had had something else to do than to sleep. There were the sounds of tongues and high words. Mrs. S—th was surprised, as well she might; for though sometimes Mr. Henderson partook freely of the bottle when he met old friends in town, he and the whole household were peaceable, orderly, and early goers to bed. The door was opened almost upon the instant; and Mrs. S—th was presently before Mr. Henderson and two others, one of whom held in his hand a whip.

"What has brought you here, Margaret, at this hour?"

"I want to speak privately to you."

"Just here; out with it," said he. "These are my friends; and if it is more money you want, you have come at an unlucky time, for I have been robbed by a villain of five pounds, which I could ill spare."

Mrs. S—th's heart died away within her. She clenched her hands to keep her from shaking; for she recollected the old story about his own son—a story which had got him the character of being harsh and unnatural. She could not mention her errand, which was nothing else than to induce her brother to use his influence in some way to get Charles out of the hands of the law. She could not utter even the word Charles, and all she could say was—

"Robbed!"

"Ay, robbed by a villain, whom I shall hang three cubits higher than Haman."

And the stern man even laughed at the thought of retribution. Yet, withal, no man could deny his generosity and general kindliness, if, even immediately after,

he did not show it by slipping a pound into the hands of his needy sister.

"There," said he; "no more at present. I will call up and see you to-morrow morning, as I go to the police office to identify the villain. Meantime, take a dram, dear Peggy, and get home to bed. The night is cold, and see that you wrap yourself well up to keep *out* the wind and *in* the spirit; it's good whisky."

Shortly afterwards she was on her way home, with more than blasted hopes of what she had travelled for.

His uncle the man he had robbed! Even with all her forced composedness, this seemed too much—ay, so much too much, that she was totally overpowered. She paused to recover strength; and, looking forward, saw a thin flying shadow coming up to her, with a shriek of delight; and immediately she was hugged rapturously and kissed all over by little Jeannie, whose movements, as they ever were—so agile, so quick, so Protean—appeared to her, now that she was stolid with despair, as the postures and gestures of a creature appearing in a dream.

"Oh, I know all," she cried; "don't speak—nay, wait now till I return."

And the creature was off like a September meteor disappearing in the west, as if to make up again to the sun, far down away behind the hills from whence it had been struck off in the height of the day.

What can the strange creature mean? But she had had experience of her, and knew the instinctive divination that got at objects and results where reason in full-grown man would syllogize into the darkness of despair.

Nor was it long before she is running back, leaping with all the *abandon* of a romp, crying—

"I will save dear Charlie yet; for I love him as much as I hate that old curmudgeon."

"What does the girl mean? Whaur was you, bairn?" said her mother.

"Oh mother, how cold it is for you! Wrap the cloak about you."

"But what *is* it that you mean, Jeannie?"

"We shall be home by-and-by; come."

And, putting an arm round her mother's waist, she impelled her forward with the strength of her wythe of an arm.

"Come, come, there are ghosts about these woods;" and then she cowered, but still impelled.

Nor did the mother press the question she had already put twice; for, as we have said, she knew the nature of the girl, who ever took her own way, and had the art to make that way either filial obedience or loving conciliation.

"Oh, I'm so frightened for these ghosts!" she continued. "You know there was a murder here once upon a time. They're so like myself—wicked, and won't answer when they're spoken to, as I would not answer you, dear mother, just now; but wait till to-morrow, and you shall see that I am your own loving Jeannie."

"Weel, weel, bairn, we *will* see. But, oh, I'm muckle afraid; d'ye know, Jeannie, Charlie has been robbing! And wha, think ye, was the man—wha but—"

"Hush, hush, mother, I know it all already; but let me beneath your cloak, I'm so frightened."

And the little sprite got in, keeping her head and the little cup of a bonnet protruding every moment to look round; yet if it could have been seen in the dark, with such a sly, half-humorous eye, as betokened one of those curiously-made creatures who seem to be formed for studies to the thoroughgoing decent pacers of the world's stage.

"Ah! now we're all safe, as poor Charlie will be to-morrow," she cried, as they got to the foot of the long row, and she emerged in the light of one of the lamps, so like a flash from a cloud, running before her mother to get her to walk faster and faster, as if some scheme she had in her head was loitering under the impediment of her mother's wearied, oh, wearied step.

Having at length reached home, Jeannie ran and got the fire as bright as her own eye, crying out occasionally, as she glanced about,

"Poor Charlie in a dungeon!" and again, a few minutes after, when puffing at the fire with the bellows,

"No fire for dear Charlie; all dark and dismal!"

And then, running for the little paper packet with the cheese and bread, and setting it down,

"But he'll see the sun to-morrow, and will sleep in his own bed to-morrow night too; that he shall. Now eat, mother, for you will be hungry; and see you this!" as she took from her pocket a very tiny bottle, which would hold somewhere about a glass.

"Take that," filling out a little whisky.

"Oh dear, dear bairn, where learnt ye a' that witchery?" said the mother, looking at her.

But the sly look, sometimes without a trace of laughter in her face, was the only answer.

And now they are stretched in bed in each other's arms; but it was a restless night for both. And how different the manifestations of the restlessness! The groans of the elder for the fate of her only boy, now suspended on the scales of justice—one branch of the balance to be lopt off by Nemesis, and the other left with a noose in the string whereon to hang that erring, yet still beloved son; hysterical laughs from Jeannie in her dreams, as she saw herself undo the kench, and

Charlie let out, clapping his hands, and praying too, and kissing Jeannie, and other fantastic tricks of fancy in her own domain, unburdened with heavy clay which soils and presses upon her wings and binds her to earth, and to these monstrous likenesses of things, which she says are all a lying nature under the bonds of a blind fate, from where she cannot get free, even though she screams of murder and oppression and cruelty, and all the ills that earth-born flesh inherits from the first man.

Yet, for all these deductions from the sleep they needed, Jeannie was up in the morning early, infusing tea for herself and mother, muttering, as she whisked about,

"No breakfast for him made by me, who love him so dearly; but in this very house, ay, this night, he will have supper; and such a supper!"

In the midst of these scenes in the little room, a knock came to the door. It was a policeman, to say that she and her mother must be up to the office by ten.

"And shall we not?" said Jeannie, laughing; "wouldn't I have been there at any rate?"

Then, a little after, came the stern Henderson, still ignorant of who robbed him. Mrs. S—th got up trembling, and looking at him with terror, so dark he appeared.

"Where is Charles?" he said.

"We don't know," said Jeannie, turning a side-glance at her mother. It was true she hated her uncle mortally, for the reason that, though he was to an extent generous to them, he was harsh too, and left them often poorly off, when from his wealth, which he concealed, he might have made them happy; and then how could they help the conduct of the son whose earnings ought to have relieved the uncle of even his small advances?

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here it is.”

fingers.

said Stewart.

said the fiscal. "This is a great want; for without it, I don't see what we can make of the case."

"Money here or money there, I've lost it anyhow; and if he isn't hanged, I'll not be pleased."

"Was there any but one man engaged in the affair?"

"Just one, and plenty."

"He had a gun?"

"Yes."

"Would you know it?"

"No. I was, to say the truth, too frightened to examine the instrument that was to shoot me."

"Then we have nothing but the admission and the testimony of the accomplices, who say it was a frolic," said Stewart.

"No frolic to me," cried Henderson. "Why then didn't they return the money?"

"They say they called and ran after you, and that you would not wait to get it back."

"Then why didn't they produce it to you?" said Henderson. "The money is appropriated."

"A circumstance," said the fiscal, "in itself sufficient to rebut the frolic. Yes, the strength of the case is there."

"So I thought," growled the man.

"You wasn't in liquor?"

"No."

"Are you ever?"

"I don't deny that in town I take a glass, but seldom so much as to affect my walking; never so much as make me dream I was robbed of money, and that too money gone from my pocket."

"Where do you carry your money?"

"In my waistcoat pocket. Sometimes I have carried a valuable bill home in my snuff-mull, when it was empty by chance."

"Where had you the five pounds?"

"I am not sure, but I think in my left waistcoat pocket."

"And you gave it on demand? It was not rifled from you?"

"I thrust it into the villain's hand, and ran."

"Well, we must confront you with the supposed robber," said the captain. "But you seem to be in choler, and I caution you against a precipitate judgment. You may naturally think the admission of the young men enough, and that may make you see what perhaps may not be to be seen. I confess the admission of *three* to be more than the law wants or wishes; yet there are peculiarities in this case that take it out of the general rules." Stewart then nodded to an officer, who went out and returned.

"There stands the prisoner."

"Charles S—th!" ejaculated the uncle: "my own nephew! execrable villain!"

And he looked at the youth with bated breath and fiery eyes.

There was silence for a few minutes. The officials looked pitiful. The mother hung down her head; and little Jeannie leered significantly, while she took the strings of her bonnet, tied them, undid them again, and flung away the ends till they went round her neck; nay, the playful minx was utterly dead to the condition of her brother who stood there, ashamed to look any one in the face, if he was not rather like an exhumed corpse; and we would not be far out if we said that she even laughed as she saw the curmudgeon staring like an angry mastiff at the brother she loved so well. But then, was she not an eccentric thing, driven hither and thither by vagrant impulses, and with thoughts in her head which nobody could understand?

And no sooner had the words been uttered than Jeannie flew to her brother, hung round his neck, kissed him, blubbered and played such antics that the fiscal could not refrain searching for his handkerchief. He found it too; but just as if this article were no part of his official property, he returned it to his pocket; and then, as he saw Charles leaning on his mother's breast, and making more noise with his heart and lungs than he could have done if he had been hanged, he resolved, after due deliberation, to let the "hanging drop" have its own way in sticking on the top of his cheek, and determined not to fall for all his jerking.

"BARBADOES, 15*th July* 18—.

"MY DEAREST LITTLE JEANNIE,—I am at length settled the manager of a great sugar factory, with £400 a year. Tell your mother I will write her by next post; and all I can say meantime is, that Messrs. Coutts and Co. will pay her £100 a year, half-yearly, till I return to keep you, for saving me from the gallows. Accept the offer of the old man. He is worth £500 a year; and you're just the little winged spirit that will keep up a fire of life in a good heart only a little out of use.

"*P.S.*—Tell uncle that I will send him five pounds of snuff, by next ship, in return for the five pounds I took out of his box on that eventful night, which was the beginning of my reformation.

"Tell Mrs. S—k and Mrs. W—pe that their sons arrived at Jamaica; but, poor fellows, they are both dead.

"The same vessel that carries the snuff will convey to mother a hogshead of sugar and a puncheon of rum. So that at night, in place of the tiny phial which held a glass, and which you used to draw out of your pocket so slily when mother was weakly, you may now mix for

THE PROCRASTINATOR.

BEING overtaken by a shower in Kensington Gardens, I sought shelter in one of the alcoves near the palace. I was scarce seated, when the storm burst with all its fury; and I observed an old fellow, who had stood loitering till the hurricane whistled round his ears, making towards me, as rapidly as his apparently palsied limbs would permit. Upon his nearer approach, he appeared rather to have suffered from infirmity than years. He wore a brownish-black coat, or rather shell, which, from its dimensions, had never been intended for the wearer; and his inexpressibles were truly inexpressible. "So," said I, as he seated himself on the bench, and shook the rain from his old broad-brimmed hat, "you see, old boy, '*Procrastination is the thief of time*;' the clouds gave you a hint of what was coming, but you seemed not to take it." "It is," replied he, eagerly. "Doctor Young is in the right. Procrastination has been my curse since I was in leading-strings. It has grown with my growth, and strengthened with my strength. It has ever been my besetting sin—my companion in prosperity and adversity; and I have slept upon it, like Samson on the lap of Delilah, till it has shorn my locks and deprived me of my strength. It has been to me a witch, a manslayer, and a murderer; and when I would have shaken it off in wrath and in disgust, I found I was no longer master of my own actions and my own house. It had brought around me a host of its blood relations—its sisters and its cousins-german—to fatten on my weakness, and haunt me to

the grave; so that when I tore myself from the embrace of one, it was only to be intercepted by another. You are young, sir, and a stranger to me; but its effects upon me and my history—the history of a poor paralytic shoemaker—if you have patience to hear, may serve as a beacon to you in your voyage through life."

Upon expressing my assent to his proposal—for the fluency and fervency of his manner had at once riveted my attention and excited curiosity—he continued:—

"I was born without a fortune, as many people are. When about five years of age, I was sent to a parish school in Roxburghshire, and procrastination went with me. Being possessed of a tolerable memory, I was not more deficient than my schoolfellows; but the task which they had studied the previous evening was by me seldom looked at till the following morning, and my seat was the last to be occupied of any other on the form. My lessons were committed to memory by a few hurried glances, and repeated with a faltering rapidity, which not unfrequently puzzled the ear of the teacher to follow me. But what was thus hastily learned, was as suddenly forgotten. They were mere surface impressions, each obliterated by the succeeding. And though I had run over a tolerable general education, I left school but little wiser than when I entered it.

"My parents—peace to their memory!"—here the old fellow looked most feelingly, and a tear of filial recollection glistened in his eyes: it added a dignity to the recital of his weakness, and I almost reverenced him—"My parents," continued he, "had no ambition to see me rise higher in society than an honest tradesman; and at thirteen I was bound apprentice to a shoemaker. Yes, sir, I was—I am a shoemaker; and but for my curse—my malady—had been an ornament to my profession. I have measured the foot of a

princess, sir; I have made slippers to his Majesty!" Here his tongue acquired new vigour from the idea of his own importance. "Yes, sir, I have made slippers to his Majesty; yet I am an unlucky—I am a bewitched—I am a ruined man. But to proceed with my history. During the first year of my apprenticeship, I acted in the capacity of errand boy; and, as such, had to run upon many an unpleasant message—sometimes to ask money, frequently to borrow it. Now, sir, I am also a *bashful* man, and, as I was saying, *bashfulness* is one of the blood relations which procrastination has fastened upon me. While acting in my last-mentioned capacity, I have gone to the house, gazed at every window, passed it and repassed it, placed my hand upon the rapper, withdrawn it, passed it and repassed it again, stood hesitating and consulting with myself, then resolved to defer it till the next day, and finally returned to my master, not with a direct lie, but a broad *equivocation;* and this was another of the cousins-german which procrastination introduced to my acquaintance.

"In the third year of my servitude, I became fond of reading; was esteemed a quick workman; and, having no desire for money beyond what was necessary to supply my wants, I gave unrestricted indulgence to my new passion. We had each an allotted quantity of work to perform weekly. Conscious of being able to complete it in half the time, and having yielded myself solely to my ruinous propensity to delay, I seldom did anything before the Thursday; and the remaining days were spent in hurry, bustle, and confusion. Occasionally I overrated my abilities—my task was unfinished, and I was compelled to count a *dead horse.* Week after week this grew upon me, till I was so firmly saddled, that, until the expiration of my ap-

prenticeship, I was never completely freed from it. This was another of my curse's handmaidens."

Here he turned to me with a look of seriousness, and said, "Beware, young man, how you trust to your own strength and your own talents; for however noble it may be to do so, let it be in the open field, before you are driven into a corner, where your arms may come in contact with the thorns and the angles of the hedges.

"About this time, too, I fell in love—yes, *fell* in love; for I just beheld the fair object, and I was a dead man, or a new man, or anything you will. Frequently as I have looked and acted like a fool, I believe I never did so so strikingly as at that moment. She was a beautiful girl—a very angel of light—about five feet three inches high, and my own age. Heaven knows how I ever had courage to declare my passion; for I put it off day after day, and week after week, always preparing a new speech against the next time of meeting her, until three or four rivals stepped forward before me. At length I did speak, and never was love more clumsily declared. I told her in three words; then looked to the ground, and again in her face most pitifully. She received my addresses just as saucily as a pretty girl could do. But it were useless to go over our courtship; it was the only happy period of my existence, and every succeeding day has been misery. Matters were eventually brought to a bearing, and the fatal day of final felicity appointed. I was yet young, and my love possessed all the madness of a first passion. She not only occupied my heart, but my whole thoughts; I could think of nothing else, speak of nothing else, and, what was worse, do nothing else: it burned up the very capabilities of action, and rendered my native indolence yet more indolent. However, the

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idea of the ordinance. It was a source of much uneasiness to my wife, and gave rise to some family quarrelling. Months succeeded weeks, and eventually the child was carried to the Episcopal church. This choked up all the slander of the town, and directed it into one channel upon my devoted head. Some said I 'wasna sound,' and all agreed I 'was nae better than I should be,' while the zealous clergyman came to my father, expressing his fears that 'his son was in a bad way.' For this, too, am I indebted to procrastination. I thus became a martyr to supposed opinions, of which I was ignorant; and such was the unchristian bigotry of my neighbours, that, deeming it sinful to employ one whom they considered little other than a pagan, about five years after my marriage I was compelled to remove with my family to London.

"We were at this period what tradesmen term *miserably hard up.* Having sold off our little stock of furniture, after discharging a few debts which were unavoidably contracted, a balance of rather less than two pounds remained; and upon this, my wife, my child, and myself were to travel a distance of three hundred and fifty miles. I will not go over the journey: we performed it on foot in twenty days; and, including lodging, our daily expense amounted to one shilling and eightpence; so that, on entering the metropolis, all we possessed was five shillings and a few pence. It was the dead of winter, and nearly dark, when we were passing down St. John Street, Clerkenwell. I was benumbed, my wife was fainting, and our poor child was blue and speechless. We entered a public-house near Smithfield, where two pints of warm porter and ginger, with a crust of bread and cheese, operated as partial restoratives. The noisy scene of butchers, drovers, and coal-heavers was new

to me. My child was afraid, my wife uncomfortable, and I, a gaping observer, forgetful of my own situation. My boy pulled my coat, and said, 'Come, father;' my wife jogged my elbow, and reminded me of a lodging; but my old reply, '*Stop a little*,' was my ninety and nine times repeated answer. Frequently the landlord made a long neck over the table, gauging the contents of our tardily emptied pint; and, as the watchman was calling 'Past eleven,' finally took it away, and bade us 'bundle off.' Now I arose, feeling at once the pride of my spirit and the poorness of my purse, vowing never to darken his door again, should I remain in London a hundred years.

"On reaching the street, I inquired at a half-grown boy where we might obtain a lodging; and after causing me to inquire twice or thrice—'I no ken, Sawney—haud awa' north,' said the brat, sarcastically imitating my accent. I next inquired of a watchman, who said there was no place upon his beat; but *beat* was Gaelic to me; and I repeated my inquiry to another, who directed me towards the hells of Saffron Hill. At a third, I requested to be informed the way, who, after abusing me for seeking lodgings at such an hour, said he had seen me in the town six hours before, and bade us go to the devil. A fourth inquired if we had any money, took us to the bar of a public-house, called for a quartern of gin, drank our healths, asked if we could obtain a bed, which being answered in the negative, he hurried to the door, bawling 'Half-past eleven,' and left me to pay for the liquor. On reaching Saffron Hill, it was in an Irish uproar: policemen, thieves, prostitutes, and Israelites were brawling in a satanic mass of iniquity; blood and murder was the order of the night. My child screamed, my wife clung to my arm; she would not,

she durst not, sleep in such a place. To be brief: we had to wander in the streets till the morning; and I believe that night, aided by a broken heart, was the forerunner of her death. It was the first time I had been compelled to walk trembling for a night without shelter, or to sit frozen on a threshold; and this, too, I owe to procrastination.

"For a time we rented a miserable garret, without furniture or fixture, at a shilling weekly, which was paid in advance. I had delayed making application for employment till our last sixpence was spent. We had passed a day without food; my child appeared dying; my wife said nothing, but she gazed upon her dear boy, and shook her head with an expression that wrung me to the soul. I rushed out almost in madness, and, in a state of unconsciousness, hurried from shop to shop in agitation and in misery. It was vain; appearances were against me. I was broken down and dejected, and my state of mind and manner appeared a compound of the maniac and the black-guard. At night I was compelled to return to the suffering victims of my propensity, penniless and unsuccessful. It was a dreadful and a sleepless night with us all; or if I did slumber upon the hard floor for a moment (for we had neither seat nor covering), it was to startle at the cries of my child wailing for hunger, or the smothered sighs of my unhappy partner. Again and again I almost thought them the voice of the Judge, saying, 'Depart from me, ye cursed.'

"I again hurried out with daybreak, for I was wretched, and resumed my inquiries; but night came, and I again returned equally successful. The yearnings of my child were now terrible, and the streaming eyes of his fond mother, as she pressed his head with her cold hand upon her lap, alone distinguished her

from death. The pains of hunger in myself were becoming insupportable; my teeth gnashed against each other, and worms seemed gnawing my heart-strings. At this moment, my dear wife looked me in the face, and, stretching her hand to me, said, 'Farewell, my love, in a few hours I and our dear child shall be at rest! Oh! hunger, hunger!' I could stand no more. Reason forsook me. I could have died for them; but I could not beg. We had nothing to pledge. Our united wearing apparel would not have brought a shilling. My wife had a pair of pocket Bibles (I had once given them in a present): my eyes fell upon them—I snatched them up unobserved—rushed from the house, and—Oh heaven! let the cause forgive the act—pawned them for eighteen-pence. It saved our lives, it obtained employment, and for a few weeks appeared to overcome my curse.

"I am afraid I grow tedious with particulars, sir; it is an old man's fault—though I am not old either; I am scarce fifty-five. After being three years in London, I was appointed foreman of an extensive establishment in the Strand. I remained in this situation about four years. It was one of respectability and trust, demanding, hourly, a vigilant and undivided attention. To another, it might have been attended with honour and profit; but to me it terminated in disgrace. Amongst other duties, I had the payment of the journeymen, and the giving out of the work. They being numerous, and their demands frequent, it would have required a clerk for the proper discharge of that duty alone. I delayed entering at the moment in my books the materials and cash given to each, until they, multiplying upon my hands, and begetting a consequent confusion, it became impossible for me to make their entry with certainty or correctness. The workmen were not slow

in discovering this, and not a few of the more profligate improved upon it to their advantage. Thus I frequently found it impossible to make both ends of my account meet; and in repeated instances, where the week's expenditure exceeded the general average, though satisfied in my own mind of its accuracy, from my inability to state the particulars, in order to conceal my infirmity, I have accounted for the overplus from my own pocket. Matters went on in this way for a considerable time. You will admit I was rendered feelingly sensible of my error, and I resolved to correct it. But my resolutions were always made of paper; they were like a complaisant debtor—full of promises, praying for grace, and dexterously evading performance. Thus, day after day, I deferred the adoption of my new system to a future period. For, sir, you must be aware there is a pleasure in procrastination, of a nature the most alluring and destructive; but it is a pleasure purchased by the sacrifice of judgment: in its nature and results it resembles the happiness of the drunkard; for, in exact ratio as our spirits are raised above their proper level, in the same proportion, when the ardent effects have evaporated, they sink beneath that level.

"I was now too proud to work as a mere journeyman, and I commenced business for myself; but I began without capital, and a gourd of sorrow hung over me, while I stood upon sand. I had some credit; but, as my bills became payable, I ever found I had put off, till the very day they became due, the means of liquidating them; then had I to run and borrow five pounds from one, and five shillings from another, urged by despair, from a hundred quarters. My creditors grew clamorous; my wife upbraided me; I flew to the bottle —to the bottle!" he repeated; "and my ruin was complete—my family, business, everything, was ne-

glected. Bills of Middlesex were served on me, declarations filed; I surrendered myself, and was locked up in Whitecross Street. It is a horrid place; the Fleet is a palace to it; the Bench, paradise! But, sir, I will draw my painful story to a close. During my imprisonment my wife died—died, not by my hands, but from the work of them! She was laid in a strange grave, and strangers laid her head in the dust, while I lay a prisoner in the city where she was buried. My boy—my poor Willie—who had been always neglected, was left without father and without mother! Sir! sir! my boy was left without food! He forsook visiting me in the prison; I heard he had turned the associate of thieves; and from that period five years have passed, and I have obtained no trace of him. But it is my doing—my poor Willie!"

Here the victim of procrastination finished his narrative. The storm had passed away, and the sun again shone out. The man had interested me, and we left the gardens together. I mentioned that I had to go into the city; he said he had business there also, and asked to accompany me. I could not refuse him. From the door by which we left the gardens, our route lay by way of Oxford Street. As we proceeded down Holborn, the church bell of St. Sepulchre's began to toll; and the crowd, collected round the top of Newgate Street, indicated an execution. As we approached the place, the criminal was brought forth. He was a young man about nineteen years of age, and had been found guilty of an aggravated case of housebreaking. As the unhappy being turned round to look upon the spectators, my companion gave a convulsive shriek, and, springing from my side, exclaimed, "Righteous Heaven! my Willie! my murdered Willie!" He had proceeded but a few paces, when he fell with his face upon the ground.

In the wretched criminal he discovered his lost, his only son. The miserable old man was conveyed, in a state of insensibility, to St. Bartholomew's Hospital, where I visited him the next day: he seemed to suffer much, and in a few hours he died with a shudder, and the word *procrastination* on his tongue.

THE TEN OF DIAMONDS.

At length I reached the Moated Grange, on a visit to my friend Græme. But since I am to speak a good deal of this place, I may as well explain that it was misnamed. There was no moat, nor had there been for a hundred years; but round the old pile—hoary, and shrivelled, and palsied enough, in all conscience, for delighting the mole-eye of any antiquarian hunks—there was a visible trace of the old ditch in a hollow covered with green sward going all round the house, which hollow was the only place clear of trees. And these trees! They stood for a mile round, like an army of giants seventy feet high, all intent, it would seem, upon choking the poor old pile, throwing their big arms over the hollow, swinging them to and fro, and dashing their points against the panes as the wind listed. It would come by-and-by to be a hard task for the stone and lime victim to hold its place, with its sinews of run mortar, against these tyrants of the wood. And then they were as full of noises as Babel itself—noises a thousand times more heterogeneous—croaking, chirping, screeching, cawing, whistling, billing, cooing, cuckooing. "What a place to live in!" I thought, fresh as I was from town, "where, if there are noises, one knows something of their meaning—maledictory, yea, devilish as it often is, expressive of the passions of men which will never sleep. But these! what could one make of such a *tintamarre?* Nothing but the reflection—that is, if you happen to be a philosopher,

which, thank God, I am not—that not one note of all this rural oratorio is without its intention; and thus we always satisfy ourselves. But when we run the matter up a little further, we find it a very small affair: two responses, one to each of two chords vibrating for ever and ever throughout all nature—pleasure and pain, pain and pleasure, turn by turn—the last pain being death!"

"How can you live here, Græme?" I said, as we stood under the old porch, looking out, or rather having our look blocked up by the thickness, and our ears deaved by the eternal screeching and cawing of five thousand crows overhead.

"There's gloom everywhere where man is," he replied, "and screeching owls in every brain. You can't get quit. Then, lowering his voice, "I am haunted, and yet live here in this Moated Grange! The difference is this: in the town the gaslight and eternal clatter distract a man like me who is plagued from within; here I find some concord between the inside and the out, only the owls in the inside are more grotesque and horrible."

"Well, Græme," said I, "it is needless to disguise what brought me here. The secret is out. The choke-damp has got wind. If the idiot had not blown his brains out, it would have been nothing. You could have paid him back, and he might now have had both his money and his brains."

"Got wind!" cried he, clutching me by the breast of the coat with the fury of a highwayman or a spasmodic actor. "Did the villain Ruggieri tell you?"

"No."

"So far well," he added, taking a long pull with his lungs, as if he had got quit of an attack of asthma; "but though I may satisfy the widow, how am I to

appease Heaven? Come," he added, again seizing me with a force in which there was a tremble, "I want to ease my mind. You are my oldest friend, and a load divided is more easily carried."

And leading the way into the parlour, where the fire had got into a fine red heat, and was sending a glare through the ruby and golden contents of several strangely-shaped bottles on the table, he threw himself on a chair on the one side, I taking one on the other. A few minutes of silence intervened.

"If it be as painful for you," he continued, "to hear a confession as it is for me to make it, you may help yourself to bear the infliction by pouring into your stomach some of that Burgundy. I will take none. I have fire enough in my brain already;" and he pushed the bottle to me.

"You were a bit of a blackleg yourself," he continued, as he threw himself back in the arm-chair, and compressed his chest with his folded arms till the blood seemed to mount to his face. "You were present at that game where I took the five thousand by a trick from Gourlay. You know, as a gambler yourself, that all the tribe are by constitution cheats. It is folly to speak of an honest gambler. The passion is a ten thousand times distilled selfishness, with no qualm of obligation to God or religion to keep it in check—only a little fear of that bugbear, society. Our club at the 'Red Lion' all knew this in our souls; but every one of us knew also that the moment he would be discovered cheating, he would be scorched with our hatred and contempt. He must leave our pure society on the instant—not of course that he was any worse than the rest of us, but only that he was unfortunate in being discovered. That night Gourlay and I were demons. We had baffled each other, and drank till our brains

seethed, though our countenances and speech betrayed nothing but the extreme of coolness. He had won a thousand of me, and hounded me from post to pillar, offering to be cleared out by my *skill*, as he called it sneeringly. The fellow, in short, hated me, because the year before, at Baden-Baden, I had taken two thousand out of him, and would not give him his revenge."

"He must have thought you honest," said I; "otherwise he would not have thus badgered you to play."

"No; he had not the generosity to think me honest. I repeat, no gambler ever thinks another gambler honest, and he lies when he says so. He knew himself to be a rogue, and thought it diamond in the teeth of diamond;" and, pausing and meditating, he repeated the word, "diamond—diamond—diamond."

I looked at him in surprise. He continued to keep up the cuckoo sound, trying to laugh, and yet totally unable to accomplish even a cackle, as if some internal force clutched the diaphragm and mocked him, so that his efforts were reduced to a gurgling as in cynanche—like a dog choking with a rope round his craig, the sounds coming jerking out in barks, and dying away again in yelps and whines.

"You will know presently why that word produces these strange effects upon me," he at length contrived to be able to say. "Nor less the form of the figure as painted in these hell-books. It is blazoned everywhere. The devil wears it in fiery lines on his face as he hounds me a-nights through these thick woods. Yet I am not afraid of it—rather court it, as if I yearned for the burning pain of its red signature in, and in, and in to my brain, as far as thought goes."

"Have you got mad, Græme?" I ejaculated. "What has the figure of a diamond, or of ten diamonds——"

"*Ten*, you would say?" he immediately cried, as he started up, and immediately threw himself down; "*the* ten, if you dared. You are commissioned by the powers yonder—you, you, too, along with the others, including the devil."

"I have no wish to be in the same commission with that great personage," said I, with a very poor attempt to laugh, for I felt anxious about my friend. "I gave him up when I threw his books into the fire, and swore never more to touch the unhallowed thing."

I perceived that my attempt at humour increased his excitement. "Repeat the words," he cried. "Say 'the ten of diamonds' right out with open mouth, and repeat them a thousand times, so as to give me ear-proof that the powers yonder," pointing to the roof, "are against me."

At this moment the door of the parlour was opened by some timid hand.

"Come hither, my pretty Edith," he said, in a calmer voice, as a little cherub-looking child, with a head so like as if, after the fashion of Danäe's, it had been powdered by Jupiter with gold dust, and a pair of blue eyes, as if the said god, in making them, had tried to emulate the wing of the Halcyon in a human orb, and intended, moreover, the light thereof to calm the storm in those of her father.

And so it did, to a certain extent; for Edith got upon his knee, and, putting her arms round his neck, kept peering with those eyes into the very pupils of her father's, till the light of innocence, softening the rigid nerve, enabled them to regain somewhat of their natural lustre.

"What did Trott, the crazy girl who spaes fortunes, give you, Edith?" and coruscations began again to mix with the softer light.

"A card," replied the girl, as she undid her embrace, and, casting her head to a side, viewed him timidly.

"She has been frightened," thought I, "by some consequences resulting from the same question put at some former time."

"And what was the name of the card?" he continued.

But the girl was now on her guard. She hesitated, and struggled to get away.

"Tell this gentleman, then."

"The ten of diamonds," cried she; and no sooner were the words out than she fled, like a beam of light chased by the shadow of a tombstone.

"You see how it is," continued Græme, getting into his former expression: "through this channel, this innocent medium, this creature the fruit of my loins, the idol of my heart, is the lightning of reproof hurled. A wandering idiot is prompted by the very inspiration of her imbecility to put into the hands of my child the emblem of my wickedness, that she in her love might place it before my eyes, there to develop the sin-print in the dark camera of my mind. No wonder she is alarmed at the mention of the words, for she read the horror produced in me when she held up what she called the pretty picture in my face. But, thank God! thank God!"——

And he fell for a moment into meditation.

"For what?" said I, as my wonder increased.

"That her mother, who is within a week of her confinement, knows nothing of this mystery."

I was silent. I might have said, "What mystery?" but I would only have irritated him.

"Rymer!"

I started. I was looking into the fire, with my ear altogether his, yet the strange mention of my name startled me.

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pit and find what philosophers do in the wells of truth. There's nothing to be seen."

"No? Look there—there! See," pointing with his finger, and clutching me tremulously, "once more—the traces as vivid as ever! See!"

I verily did think I saw something luminous, but it quickly disappeared. "Oh, probably the reflection of a lantern," I said.

"Yes, a magic one," he replied sneeringly.

"I know of no more magical lantern than a man's head," I replied, a little disconcerted by his sneer. "Chemists say there's more phosphorus in the brain than anywhere else; and so I sometimes think."

He made no reply, but, seizing me by the coat, dragged me after him as he hurried out of the room, and making for a back door, led me out, bareheaded as I was, into the wood. The darkness had waxed to pitchiness, and the noises were hushed. The crows had gone to roost; and had it not been for some too-hoos of the jolly owl, sounding his horn as he rejoiced that the hated sun had gone to annoy other owls in the west, the silence would have been complete. But, in truth, I hate silence as well as darkness, and have no more sympathy with the followers of Pythagoras than I have with the triumph of the blind Roman who silenced the covey of pretty women, in the heat of their condolences for his blindness, by reminding them that they forgot he could feel in the dark. I thought more of the fire inside, and the bottle of Burgundy, on which I had made as yet only a small impression.

"If I want darkness, I can as well shut my eyes," said I peevishly, "and I would even have the advantage of some phosphorescent touches of the fancy."

"Will you see that with your eyes shut?" he exclaimed triumphantly, as he bent his body forward to

an angle of forty-five, and pointed with his finger to an object clearly illumined, and exhibiting distinctly a large card, with ten red diamonds sharply traced upon it. The advantage he had got over me was lost in the rapture of his gaze; and he seemed to be charmed by the apparition, for he began to move slowly forward, still pointing his finger, and without apparently drawing a breath. Though a little taken by surprise for the instant, it was not easy for me to give up my practical wisdom, which, as a matter of course, pointed to a trick.

"You do see it, then?" said he.

"Surely," said I. "There is no mistake it is the figure of the ten of diamonds, probably stuck upon a turnip lantern."

"I did not ask you for a banter," he replied angrily. "I can draw my own conclusions. All I wanted was to satisfy myself that I was free from a monomaniacal illusion. We cannot both be mad; besides, you're a sceptic, and the testimony of a sceptic's eyes is better than the sneer of his tongue."

Still he proceeded, I following, and the apparition retreating. "I told you to remember what Edith said," he continued, as he still pointed his finger; "and I fancy you can never forget that before you. The two things are wide apart."

"And so are the two ends of a rope with which a man hangs himself," said I.

"It is gone!" cried my friend, without noticing my remark. "It has receded into that infinite from whence it was commissioned to earth to strike its lightning upon the eye of a falling, erring, miserable mortal."

"It is gone," said I; "and I am gone also—to finish my bottle of Burgundy, which I have as little doubt

was commissioned from finitude to strike a little fire into the heart of another erring mortal, not at this moment perfectly happy."

And I made my way as quick as possible into the parlour, glad to get quit of the chill of the night air. Meanwhile, there appeared signs of some extraordinary movement in the other parts of the house, the nature of which Græme probably ascertained as he came along the lobby, for I heard bustling and earnest conversation; and presently little Edith came stepping in beside me, with something very mysterious in her blue eyes, far too mysterious for being confided to loud words, and so a whisper told me that her mother was taken ill, and that Dr. Rogers had been sent for. This little bit of information carried more to my mind than it brought away from Edith's. I knew before that Mrs. Græme was on the eve of confinement, and it now appeared she had been taken in labour. I saw, too, that my visit had not been very well timed, and the worse that Græme himself was in the extraordinary frame of mind in which I found him—unfit for facing the dangers, repaying the affections, performing the duties, and receiving the honours or enjoying the hopes of his situation. A rap at the door was the signal for Edith's departure, with the words on her tongue that she knew the doctor's knock. I was now, I thought, to be left to myself; nor was I displeased, for I wanted a lounge and a meditation; though of the latter I could not see that I could make much, if any, more than confirming myself against all preternaturals as agents on earth, however certain their existence may be beyond the mystic veil that divides the two worlds. I had known Græme's crime and Gourlay's self-murder; but the crime was a trick among blacklegs, and the suicide was the madness of a gambler,

EMBEDDING OF DIAMOND

struck me as remarkable, that, while he got into contortions and general restlessness, putting his hand to his brow, throwing one leg over another, closing his hands, and heaving long sighs, he never so much as thought it worth his pains to ask my opinion of the scene in the wood. It seemed as if he was so thoroughly convinced of a divine manifestation against him, that he despised any exceptional scepticism as utterly beneath his notice or attention—thoroughly engrossed, as he appeared to be, with the terrible sanction of a portent of some coming retribution. His silence in some degree distressed me, as I thought he resented my levity in commenting upon his convictions; so it was with some relief that Dr. Rogers came in and sat down at the table, apparently to wait for a call to the bedroom. A man this of ostentatious gloom,—too grave to deign to be witty, too sanctified to stoop to be cheerful, and therefore not the man I could have wished to see as the medical adviser, and perhaps the religious confidant, of my friend and his wife. A temperate man, too, by his own confession, pronounced over the top of a bottle; and he drank as if for health, while his manner of beslabbering the glass with his thick lips indicated a contempt for its confined capacity; a tumbler would have suited *him* better; and he waxed apparently graver when the delightful aroma of the Bordeaux grape fondled his nostrils. We got into supernaturals immediately, though how the subject was introduced I cannot remember; but Dr. Rogers was a grave and heavy advocate for divine manifestation, and Græme's ear, circumcised to delicacy, hung upon his thick lips. I asked for instances beyond the domain of the addled brains of old women, or the excited fancies of young; and Græme looked at me intently, without saying a word.

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agencies ever have—in any stage of the world, in any place, way, or manner, or by any means—had to do with earthly things, or have to do in those days, or will have to do in any future time or place on the earth's surface, your admission closes up your mouth for ever."

"To do, in those days, on this night, not many hours agone!" cried Græme, with rolling eyes. "Who cares for admissions of those who see, when one's own eyes are nearer the brain than are the eyes or lips of him who admits, or of him who denies?"

"Not hours ago!" said the doctor, fixing his big eyes on the face of Græme; "and so near a birth?"

"Oh, she knows nothing," said Græme.

"And I am supremely ignorant," said I.

"Of what?" inquired Rogers, turning his face again to Græme, as if he would take him into his mouth.

But just as he expected an answer, a slight rap sounded from the door. Rogers himself opened it, and found that the call was for him. Græme and I were left again together, but not to resume the former silence.

"I did not ask you," said he, "what you thought of the figure in the wood, for I expected nothing but a sceptical sneer. You have heard Rogers. He is a shrewd fellow, belonging to a profession not remarkable for credulity."

"Answer me this," said I: "Did no one know the duplicate card you used in the cheat?"

"You were present and Ruggieri, no others; did you know it?"

"No."

"Then do you know that Ruggieri is dead in Italy? and even if he had more penetration than you, the secret died with him. But, I tell you, he could not have known. Nothing transpired at the play to show

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gings, by having taken up a piece of what he considered quartz to throw at his dog called Goldy. Human history is full of such things; but, marvellous as they are, they are not more so than the ways by which man manufactures mysteries, and gets them believed as the work of Heaven. As to that illuminated figure I saw in the wood"——

My speech was interrupted by a strange sound from the other end of the house. Græme started to his feet. It was not one of pain coming from a sick-room, but rather one of surprise, and there seemed a bustle among the servants. The door opened, and a woman's face, with two wild staring eyes, looked in. "Come here, sir," she cried, and disappeared upon the instant.

"Something more," ejaculated Græme, as he hurried away. I was allowed no time for an absurd monologue. Græme was not absent many minutes, when he hurried in as he had hurried out, but his face was not that which he took with him, braced up into surprise and fear, as that was. He was now as pale as death's pale horse, and nearly as furious. His eye beamed an unnatural light—his breathing was quick and snatchy, as if every inspiration and expiration pained the lungs. He seemed to wish some one to bind him with ropes, that he might escape the vibrations of his muscles, and be steadied to be able to speak.

"Be calm," said I, taking him by the shoulders; "what new discovery is this? Nothing wrong with Mrs. Græme, I hope?"

"The child," he cried; but he could get no further.

"The child is"——

"Is what?" said I.

"Is marked on the back with the figure of the ten of diamonds."

"Pity it was not marked where it will wear its

pockets," said I; "but it will assuredly be a very fortunate child, nevertheless, and shall bear a load of diamonds on his back like the Arabian Alcansar."

"Are you mad?" he cried.

"Yes, with reason," I replied. "You know, nothing appears so outrageously insane to a madman, as that same God's gift called reason. They say, those who are bitten by the tarantula, and get dancing mad, think the wondering crowd about them raving maniacs. And there was the weeping philanthropist in the asylum of Montrose, in Scotland, who wept all day, and could not be consoled, because of all the people outside the asylum being mad.

"But," he gasped, "the thing is there."

"No doubt on't," said I, "and you ought to be grateful. I have read somewhere of one John Zopyrus, who went mad when he heard of a son being born to him; and here you are not mad, though you have a son (I hope) born to you, with ten diamonds besides."

"But the thing is there," he again cried.

"Ay, there's the rub, my dear fellow; the rub is there—let the rub *be* there; that is, go and rub, and the thing rubbed will not be there after the rubbing."

"Madness, man! It is a true mother's mark."

"Verily, a real *nævus maternus*," said I, "impressed by an avenging angel on the mother's brain, and transferred by nature's daguerreotype to the back of the child."

"You have said it."

"Nay, it is you who have said it," I continued; "and I will even suppose it is a mother's mark, to please you for a little, though it has no more that character than this sword-prick in my left cheek. But taking it in your own way, I have a theory I could propound to you about these marks. We say that the soul is in

the body. It is just as true that the body is in the soul. Every member of the entire physical person is represented in the brain, though we cannot discern the form in these white viscera. Now, see you, if a man loses his finger, his son will not be awanting in that member. But there are cases where the want of a member is hereditary. Why? Because the member was not represented in the cerebral microcosm of the first deficient person. From this small epitome in the brain, the child is an extended copy—*extended* from a mathematical point, where all the members and lineaments are *intended.* So, when the fancy of the mother is working in the brain—say, in realizing some external image—it will impress it in the cerebral person (woman) there epitomized; and if she is in a certain way, the image will go to a corresponding part of the fœtal point, which is the epitome of the child. A most ingenious, and satisfactory, and simple theory, which will explain the ten-of-diamond nævus, for"——

"Dreadful imbecility!" he exclaimed, as he threw himself on his chair; "most unaccountable and cruel trifling with a notable visitation of retributive justice, indicated by visible signs of terrible import to him who must bear the cross, and be reconciled to an angry Deity."

"Against all that may tend to penitence for a past crime," said I, getting grave, where gravity might avail for good, "I have nothing to say. But Heaven does not work through the mean of man's deceit and stratagem, and the good that comes of fear goes with returning courage."

Conscious of getting into a puling humour, I had no objection to an interruption by the entrance of Rogers, who, having finished his work, was probably intent upon the gratification which generally follows.

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indications we know not, further than that a mysterious purpose is served by both. But might I ask if ever there was any occasion on which the figure of this card might, as connected with some thrilling incident, have been impressed upon the imagination of the mother?"

"Never," cried Græme, as he shook violently.

"Then it betokens fortune to the heir of the Moated Grange," said Rogers.

"It betokens vengeance!" roared Græme, no longer able to contain himself; and he began to pace rapidly the room. Then stopping before me—

"How long will you torment me with your scepticism? Here, Betha," he cried to the woman, who at the instant again called Rogers, "what did you see on the back of the boy?"

"The ten of diamonds, sir," replied she, evidently frightened by the wild eyes of her master. "But you are not to be feared. Do I not know God's signs when I see them fresh from his very finger? I have seen them aforetime; and no man or woman on earth, no, even our minister, will convince me they are meant for nothing. This bairn will be a rich man, but it will not be by the devil's books; for he who made the mark does not tempt to evil by promises printed on the bodies of them he loves."

"I want not this drivelling," said her master, on whom her reading of the sign had an effect the very opposite of that intended. "You're a fool, but you have eyes. Say, once for all, you saw it, and will swear. Take her words, Rymer."

"As clear as I see the mark on your cheek, sir," she said, addressing me. "It was not from one who loved you so well as your mother did when she bore you, you got that mark."

"I got it from a villain called Ruggieri," I replied,

caring nothing for the start I produced in Græme, but keeping my eye on the face of Rogers.

I will say nothing of what I observed on that long, sombre, saturnine index. It was an experiment on my part, and I might have found something, merely because I expected it; nor do I think Græme knew my object, though he felt the words as a surprise.

"And who is Ruggieri?" said the doctor, by way of putting a simple question.

"*Perhaps* an Italian," said I. "Rogers is, they say, the Scotch representative of that name."

"It is a lie, sir!" cried the grave son of Æsculapius; but finding he had committed a mistake, he beat up an apology close upon the heels of his insult. "I beg your pardon; I simply meant that the two names are different, and that you were out in your etymology."

"I am satisfied," I replied.

"And so am I," growled the doctor, as he shuffled out, followed by Betha.

"What the devil do you mean?" said the colonel, coming up, and looking me sternly in the face. "Is not this business serious enough for me and this house already, without the mention to that man, who knows nothing of me or of my history, of a name hateful to both you and me?"

"At present I have no intention of telling you what I meant by introducing that name in the presence of Rogers."

"More mystery!" said he.

"No mystery—all as plain as little Edith's card she got from Trott, or the blazon in the wood, or the mark on the child's back. But I do not wish to dwell longer on a subject which gives you so much pain. I am to be off in the morning, and I should wish, before I go, to know what is to be the issue of all this wonderful working."

Græme had now seated himself; and I resumed my chair also, to wait an answer, which his manner seemed to indicate might be slow and delicate. We looked, in the dim light of the room, at two in the morning, like two wizards trying our skill in working out some scheme of *diablerie;* yet, in reality, how unlike! For though we had both been gamblers, and consequently bad men, we had for years renounced the wild ways of an ill-regulated youth, and settled down to tread, with pleasure to ourselves and profit to others, the decent paths of virtue.

"I am resolved," said Græme at length——

"On what?" I inquired.

"On making amends. That money, which by means of the substituted card I took from Gourlay, sticks like a bone-splint in the red throat of my penitence. I cannot pray myself, nor join Annabel, nor listen to Edith, when they send up their supplications to that place where mercy is, and where, too, vengeance is—vengeance which, in the very form of my pictured crime, dogs me everywhere, as you have seen, though a philosophical pride prevents you from giving faith to what you have seen—vengeance which, though using no earthly instruments, is yet the stronger, and more terrible to me, for that very circumstance that it brings up my conscience, and parades its pictured whisperings before my vision, scorching my brain, and making me mad—vengeance, breaking no bones, nor lacerating flesh, nor spilling blood, yet going to the heart of the human organism, among the fine tissues where begin the rudiments of being, and whence issue the springs of feeling, sympathy, hope, love, and justice, all of which it poisons, and turns into agonies. Yes, sir, vengeance which, claiming the assistance of the fairest virtues, conjugal love and angelic purity, makes them smite

with shame, so that it were even a relief to me that the wife of my bosom were wicked, and the child of my affections a creature of sin. What are these signs that haunt me but instigators to redemption? and can I hesitate when Heaven asks obedience?"

"A useless harangue," said I, "when you have the means of saving yourself. Pay the money, read your Bible, and the signs will cease."

"You have said it. I will pay the money; but I do not know where the woman Gourlay lives."

"That is not a difficult matter. Where money is to be paid, the recipient will start out of the bosom of the earth. I am about sick of this chamber of mysteries—though no mysteries to me; and I go to bed. I doubt if you may expect to see me at the breakfast table in the morning."

"Will you leave me in this condition?" he said, with an imploring eye.

"You will hear from me. Good night."

In the midst of all these supernaturals, I remained myself pretty natural—got naturally among the comfortable bed-clothes, fell naturally asleep, and, in consequence of late hours, slept naturally longer than I intended. I started at seven, got my bag, and, without seeing Græme, set out for C—— town, got breakfast, and then took the stage for a seaport not very far distant. Having arrived at my destination, I sought out the Eastergate, a dirty street inhabited by poor people, mounted three pair of stairs till I saw through a slate-pane, knocked at a door, and was met by a woman, with an umbrageously bearded face peering out from the side of her head-gear—that is, there was a head there in addition to her own.

"The devil!" said the man. "How did you find me out?"

"By the trail of evil," I said, as I walked in, and shut the door behind me.

"Did you not know I was dead?" he continued, by way of desperate raillery.

"Yes, the devil was once reported to be dead and buried in a certain long town, but it was only a feint, whereby to catch the unwary Whigs. Let us have seats. I want a little quiet conversation with you both."

We seemed rather a comfortable party round the fire.

"Ruggieri," said I, "do you know that scar?"

"I have certainly seen it before," replied he, with the utmost composure.

"Well, you know the attack you made upon me at Brussels, for the convenient purpose of getting buried along with your victim a certain little piece of dirty paper I have in my pocket, whereby you became bound to pay to me a thousand florins which I lent you, on the faith of one I took for a gentleman."

"The scar I deny," he replied, unblushingly; "and as for the bit of paper, if you can find any one in these parts who can prove that the signature thereto was written by this hand belonging to this person now sitting before you, you will accomplish something more wonderful than finding me out here." And he laughed in his old boisterous way.

"The more difficult, I daresay," replied I, as I fixed a pretty inquisitive gaze on him, "that you have a duplicate to your real name of Charles Rogers."

"'Tis a lie!" he exclaimed. "My father was—was —yes—an artist in Bologna—the cleverest magician in Italy."

"And that is the reason," said I calmly, "that your brother the doctor works his tricks so cleverly at the Moated Grange."

Subtle officers accomplish much by attacks of surprise —going home with a fact known to the criminal to be true, but supposed by him to be unknown to all the world besides. I had acted on this principle, and the effect was singular. His tongue, which had laid in a stock of nervous fluid for roaring like a steam-boiler a little opened, was palsied. He turned on me a blank look; then, directing his eye to the woman, "You infernal hag," he exclaimed, "all this comes from you!"

"I deny it," said the woman, as she left his side and came round to mine. "But I now know, what I always suspected, that you are a villain. Sir," she continued, "this man, and his brother Dr. Rogers, prevailed upon me to give them a paper, to enable them to get out of Colonel Græme the money he won from my husband. I believe they have got it, and that they are keeping it from me."

"They have not got it," said I, "and never will. The money is yours, and will be paid to you, if to any."

"Thank God!" she exclaimed. "No good could come out of the designs of this man and his brother. They made it up to terrify the colonel"——

A look from the man stopped her; but the broken sentence was to me a volume. They sat and looked lightnings at each other; and I contented myself with thinking, that when a rotten tree splits, bears catch honey.

"Oh, I'm not to be frightened," she continued, as she gathered up courage to dare the villain. "I will tell all about the ten of diamonds which I heard made up between them."

"You most haggard of all haggard hags!" cried the man, as his fury rose, "do you know, that while I could have got you this money, I can cut you out of it? Was it the loss of the money, think ye, that made

the wretched coward, your husband, shoot himself? No, it was conscience. They were a pair of villains. I know that Gourlay had a secreted card, whereby he was to blackleg Græme, and that it was disappointment, shame, and conscience, working all together, that made him draw the trigger to end a villanous life. But the game is up," he continued, as he rose and got hold of his hat; then standing erect and fearless, he held out his finger, pointing to me—"Rymer!" he said impressively, but with devilish calmness, "let your ears tingle as you think of me; it will keep you in remembrance of a friend, who, when next he meets you, will embrace you *cordially*—about the heart, you know. Good night!"

"And well gone," said the woman, as she heard the door slammed with a noise that shook the crazy tenement. "Oh! I am so happy you have come to relieve me of an engagement which I was ashamed of, and which would have yielded me nothing; for their object was to force money out of your friend, and then divide it between them."

"How did Rogers or Ruggieri find you out?" inquired I.

"I cannot tell; the nose of a bloodhound has a finer sense than a sheep-dog's."

"And how did you come to know of the compact between the brothers?"

"They got unwary under wine drunk at that fir table. The doctor was the medical attendant of Colonel Græme, and this gave him means of working upon his conscience; and I know they have been at this work for a time."

"But how did Ruggieri come to know about the ten of diamonds?"

"Oh, the card was found crumpled up under the

table by Ruggieri himself, who, with you, was present at the play. He has the card at this moment. I have seen it. But this is the first time I ever heard of Gourlay's intention to cheat. I will never believe that; but then I am his widow, and may be too favourable to him, while Ruggieri was his enemy, and may be too vindictive."

"And how was the colonel to be applied to, after his conscience was wrought up to pay?"

"The doctor was to open the subject, and undertake to negotiate with me, to whom he was to hand over the money—one penny of which I never would have received."

"The matter is now in better hands," said I. "Will you be staunch and firm in detailing all you know of the scheme?"

"Yes, though I should not receive a farthing."

"And you will be willing to go to the Moated Grange, and, if necessary, swear to those things?"

"I will; and, sir, serious though the whole affair has been to me—for I am poor, and have children—I sometimes wondered, if I did not laugh, at the queer, far-brought, devilish designs of the doctor. Oh, he is a very dragon that for cunning! I heard him say he would impress a painted piece of paper on the child's back, so as to leave a mark, and swear it was a mother's mark, graven by the hands of the Almighty. Oh the blasphemy and wickedness of man!"

"Go, dress yourself," said I, "and come with me to the Grange."

"I will, if you can give me some minutes to get a neighbour to take charge of George and Anne." And away she went to get this family arrangement completed, while I sat panting with desire to free my friend from the agony of his condition.

It was about seven o'clock of that same evening that Mrs. Gourlay and I reached the Moated Grange. I got her shown into an ante-room, to wait the issue of my interview with Græme. It happened that the doctor and he were together, and it even seemed as if they were converging towards a medium state of confidence. I could observe from the looks of the victim that he had been so far at least drawn into a recital of facts (the nature of which it was not difficult for me to conjecture), for I heard the word Gourlay fall from his lips, as the last of a sentence which my entry had cut short. Indeed, I may as well state here that Græme afterwards admitted to me that when I entered he was in the midst of a confession of the whole secret of the false play, to which confession he had been first driven by his internal monitor; and secondly, led or rather pulled on by the arch-ambidexter, whose game it was to cheat the cheater, and get the money from him upon some pretence of seeking out Mrs. Gourlay and paying the money to her. I was, in short, in the very nick of time, and could hardly help smiling at the strange part I was playing in what was, as I thought, one of those serious melodramatic farces of which (in the Frenchman's sense) this strange world of laughter and groans is made up.

"Dr. Rogers," said I, after the customary greetings, "it is well I have found you. I picked up a poor woman by the way who lay under the seizure of premature labour, and knowing the generosity of my friend, I brought her here for succour and relief. She is in the green parlour, and, I fear, in exigency. Come."

"May I see her?" said Græme.

"Certainly, for a moment," said Rogers. "Ah! I rejoice at these opportunities of employing the benefi-

cence of our profession. Who knows but I may bring into the world one who will change the aspect of a hemisphere, and work out some great blessings to the human race!"

And following me, they arrived at the door of the green parlour. I opened it. Rogers walked forward, Græme followed, and I stood in the midst of the three.

"Dr. Rogers—Mrs. Gourlay, an intimate friend of your brother, Signor Ruggieri."

"Colonel Græme—Mrs. Gourlay, the widow of that unfortunate man, Ebenezer Gourlay."

To which Mrs. Gourlay responded by a curtsey, deep and respectful.

"I am master for the nonce. The door is locked, and Mrs. Gourlay must be delivered of her child with the nævus of the ten of diamonds on its back."

And she was delivered, but not with the assistance of the doctor. She performed her part well. By a little drawing out, on my part, I got her to tell her story; how she had got acquainted with the two brothers; how they had laid their plans; how she came to know of the crumpled card, and the use they were to make of it; the trick of the impression on the child's back; the forcing of the money from the colonel on the pretence of paying it to her, with her conviction that she would never handle a penny of it.

During the period of this extraordinary recital, it was my part to watch the countenances of the two listeners. Græme sat as if bound to his chair; every word of the woman seemed to work as a charm upon him, relieving him of the conviction he had been impressed with, that he was specially under the judgment of Heaven, without depriving him of the consolation of a late penitence. Sometimes I caught his eye, and, I fairly admit, I was wicked enough to indulge in a little

mute risibility to give him confidence in the conclusions he was fast drawing from the somewhat garrulous narrative of the poor widow.

As for the doctor, he held out like a Milo. From the first moment he saw the woman he knew that the game was up with him, but he knew also, what all hardened sinners know, that they owe it to the cacodaimon they obey, to deny everything to the last, as if they were afraid to show any indication of what they consider the weakness of being good. We allowed him to get quit upon the condition of silence on his part, for a prudent forbearance on ours.

Mrs. Gourlay remained at the Grange for some time, whereby we had an opportunity of further ascertaining all the details of the machination. A sum of money was given to her, and Græme's conscience was relieved, as well by this retribution as by a conviction to which we both came, that the game between him and Gourlay was rendered at least equal by the fact which we had both reason to believe, as stated by Ruggieri, that Gourlay himself intended to cheat, and that his death could be more easily accounted for on that theory than on any other.

So far as peace could be brought to one truly penitent, that peace was brought; and many a time since I have admired, in the happiness of the family at the Grange, that exemplification of the promise of our blessed faith, that there is no degree of guilt which may not be atoned for by the heart that is contrite, and trusts to the mercy of Heaven through the eternally-ordained source.

I may gratify a whim by informing the readers of the Border Tales that the secret of the mark on the child's back was never communicated to Mrs. Græme. The nurse had told her of the fact of the strange pheno-

menon, and she always clung to the belief that it was an omen of good fortune to the boy. But under what mysterious conditions is the chain of cause and effect kept up! The frequent allusion made by the mother to the fact of the mark, drew her son's attention to the cards. He early became fond of playing with them, as boys do. The early feeling germinated, and became a kind of passion, and I have reason to believe he became a gambler like his father, squandering away a great part of his patrimony.

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